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New York Journal, 14 July 1788

Extract of a letter from Albany, July 6.

“As I suppose you will be anxious to hear some of the particulars concerning the unhappy disturbances which happened here the fourth instant, I shall endeavor to give you as exact an account as possible.—

“When the news of the adoption of the constitution, by the state of Virginia, arrived here, the federal party caused the bells to be rung; walked up to the fort in procession; had ten guns fired with three huzzas between each shot. The same evening the antifederal party had a meeting, and concluded on walking to the fort in procession the next morning, to burn the constitution, which they put into execution about eight o’clock. About eleven both parties joined to celebrate independency; walked in procession to the fort, and had thirteen cannon fired; after which the federal party, with a few of the other, dined at Mr. Lewis’s;¹ the principal part of the antifederal party went to Mr. Hilton’s, where they had a flag displayed, and were firing guns and huzzaing all the fore part of the day. There was a few light horse under the command of Dirck Ten Broeck, Esq. and the artillery company under arms, who, when they were dismissed at twelve, had orders to be on the parade at five, in order to spend the afternoon, in celebrating independency, as they had the morning—before five o’clock, the federal party agreed to spend the remainder of the day in rejoicing on account of the adoption of the constitution by ten states; when the troops paraded, they were informed of the intentions of the party, and after Abraham G. Lansing, Esq. had the artillery company dismissed (for he could not consistent with his political sentiments rejoice with them) Major Cumpston² ordered all who were federal to parade, when every man under arms paraded except three, who joined the antifederalists at Mr. Hilton’s.

“The federalists then began their manœuvres by walking through the city, carrying a small field piece and firing it at different parts of the town, they turned up the lane which leads from Court to Green street, intending to go past Mr. Hilton’s; but as soon as they entered the street a violent engagement ensued—stones, clubs, and bricks were used on both sides—the light horse were beat back, and went round the block to the other end of the street, where they joined in the action. It was expected some lives would have been lost, for the artillery made use of bayonets; the federal party being most powerful, forced into the house, and made prisoners of those who had not escaped.

“Those who were most hurt in the engagement are, Alderman Price, T. V. W. Graham, and Dirck Ten Broeck, Esqrs. Messrs. Thomas and Gerrit Witbeck, David Gibson a constable, a Mr. M’Dole, and a young man of the name of M’Kinzie, a merchant’s clerk and an apprentice of the printer’s; there are many who live in the north and south parts of the town whose names I do not know were much bruized, but it is expected they will all recover. Alderman M’Clallen,

and Mr. James Caldwell, each received a slight wound in the head. Mr. Graham, was the first knocked down by a stone on the head and his life was for some minutes dispaired of.

“The windows of Hilton’s house were all broke, and much damage done to his furniture, apprised at thirty-six pounds; the damage done the house is supposed to be as much.”

1. Robert Lewis’s tavern was called the “City Tavern.” It seems to have been favored by the Common Council for such celebrations as that of the Fourth of July.

2. Probably shopkeeper Edward Cumpston.

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