



The Times

Old-time tying of the knot

Re-enactors renew their wedding vows at city church

Tuesday, December 30, 2008

BY MEGAN DeMARCO

Special to the Times

When Wendy and Edward Moyer decided to renew their wedding vows, they wanted to do it in style.

Colonial style that is.

The couple, both historical re-enactors, were looking forward to their 20th wedding anniversary in September. So, when they heard the organizers of Patriots' Week was looking for a couple to marry or renew their vows during a colonial worship service, they jumped at the chance. Even if it meant celebrating a bit early.

On Sunday, the Moyers, clad in colonial garb, stood before fellow re-enactors and friends and renewed their vows at First Presbyterian Church on East State Street in Trenton.

The service was presided over by the Rev. John Allen, the church's pastor. Also dressed in colonial clothes, he took on the persona of Elihu Spencer, pastor of the church from 1764 to 1783. Spencer is buried in the church's cemetery.

Allen said on Dec. 28, 1776, Spencer would not have actually been in Trenton, because there was a price on his head due to his connection with the Continental Congress. Instead, he had been sent out of Trenton to try to convince colonialists still on the fence to join the revolution.

"We are an emerging country this morning," Allen said in his historical sermon, making a reference to the famous Christmas Day Battle of Trenton. "We've heard the news of the battles here in the streets and the victory over the Hessians that have been in our barracks."

He added, "We've seen the hope, we've seen the turning point for our brave young troops."

Although Edward and Wendy, whose colonial name is Gwendolyn, live in Bucks County, Pa., she works at the Old Barracks Museum in Trenton.

"It was wonderful," she said of the ceremony. "It was a lot shorter than our other one."

"I actually liked it better than our first one," Edward Moyer said. "Less nerves."

Throughout the service, members of the congregation sang hymns and followed along with the historical program titled "The Psalm Book for 1776 Presbyterian Church at Trenton, Corner of Second and Queen."

Another re-enactor even "weighed the sermon," a tradition in the 18th century in which church elders critiqued a pastor's sermon.

Allen said many 18th-century weddings were held between Christmas and New Year's, because it was a

time when family was together.

This year was the second time the historical church ceremony has been used as part of Patriots' Week.

The wedding ceremony was followed by a colonial reception in the basement of the church.

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