

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Strachwitz Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil  
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus  
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus  
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke  
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht  
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz  
Marx vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
von Ossietzky May Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka  
Petalozzi Platon Pückler Liebermann Korolenko  
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# **The Dare Boys of 1776**

Stephen Angus Cox

# Imprint

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# CHAPTER I

## THE CLANG OF THE LIBERTY BELL

IT was the fourth day of July of the year 1776. There was great excitement in all of the colonies of America at that time, for on this day the representatives of the people, gathered together in the city of Philadelphia, were to decide whether the Declaration of Independence, already drawn up, should be adopted and signed. In Philadelphia, as may well be supposed, the excitement was so intense that the people suspended business. They thronged the streets, walking up and down, talking excitedly, and waiting, waiting for the decision to be made, the determination that would mean so much to them.

The people talked and gesticulated, and there was considerable arguing, some contending that the Declaration of Independence would be adopted and signed, others that it would not.

"Look, here it is almost evening," contended one of these latter, "and nothing has been done yet. If they were going to adopt the Declaration it would have been done before this. The delay means that it will not be done."

"They are taking their time to it, that is all," replied the others. "It is a most serious matter and not to be taken up hastily and without due thought. They will adopt and sign the Declaration of Independence before the day is gone, see if they don't!"

Dick and Tom Dare, two patriot youths, brothers, from about three miles over in New Jersey, who had come to the city to hear the news, listening eagerly, were thrilled by the excitement and interest shown on every side.

"Oh, I hope they will adopt the Declaration of Independence, Dick!" said Tom. "I'm sure they will, aren't you?"

"I think they will, Tom. I hope so."

"Bah, they won't do nothin' uv the kind, Dick Dare!" cried a sneering voice at their side, and turning, the Dare youths saw Zeke Boggs and Lem Hicks, the sons of two Tory neighbors, standing there.

"Uv course they won't," added Lem Hicks. "They don't darst. They know that ef they do, they'll git into trouble with King George. They won't ring no old Liberty Bell to-day."

"Well, they just will!" cried Tom Dare, who was an excitable, impulsive youth. "They'll ring it pretty soon, Lem Hicks, and they aren't afraid of your old king, not a bit of it!"

"What's thet! Don't ye dare speak disrespectfully uv the king!" snarled Zeke Boggs, making a threatening motion with his fist. "Ef ye do, why et'll be the worse fur ye, that's all."

Instantly Dick Dare, who was the elder of the brothers, a handsome, manly youth of eighteen years, seized Zeke by the wrist, and pushed him back, at the same time saying quietly, yet firmly:

"That will do, Zeke. Don't go making any threats. You and Lem go about your business, and don't interfere with Tom and I."

"We'll go where we please," snarled Zeke, who was a vicious youth of about Dick's age, as was Lem Hicks also. "An' we'll stay heer ef we want to, too, Dick Dare, an' ye can't he'p yerself."

"That's all right," calmly; "you can stay here, I suppose, if you want to, but you will have to behave yourselves and attend to your own business. If you try to interfere with Tom and I, or to bully us, you will wish you hadn't stayed."

"Is thet so?" sneeringly. "Whut'll ye do, Dick Dare, hey?"

"Yes, whut'll ye do?" cried Lem Hicks, pushing forward and facing Dick.

Tom confronted him quickly, and met his angry glare unflinchingly. Tom was only sixteen years of age, but he was well-built and athletic for his age, and was moreover as brave as a lion, though somewhat quick-tempered and impulsive. He put out his left hand and, placing it against Lem's chest, pushed him back.

"Hold on, Lem Hicks," he said. "Just you stand back. One at a time talking with Dick is enough. You talk to me, if you want to talk to anybody."

Lem Hicks was a hot-tempered youth also, and suddenly his rage flared to the surface. He didn't relish being pushed back by Tom, and quick as a flash, he gave the patriot youth a smart slap on the cheek.

"That thet, an' I'arn to keep yer han's offen people!" he snarled.

The blow was with the flat of the hand, and while it smarted, it did not hurt much to speak of, but it was sufficient to start impulsive Tom Dare into action, and quick as a flash out shot his fist. It caught Lem Hicks between the eyes and knocked him down flat on his back.

"There, see how you like that!" exclaimed Tom, his eyes flashing. "I guess that next time you'll think once or twice before you slap me in the face!"

With an angry exclamation, Zeke Boggs struck at Dick Dare, but that youth was on his guard, and he warded the blow off, and striking out himself, landed a blow on Zeke's jaw, downing him as neatly as had been the case with Hicks.

Instantly a crowd gathered, many eagerly asking what the trouble was about. Dick and Tom explained that the two youths who had been floored were Tories, and the sympathies of the crowd were at once with Dick and Tom, more especially when they learned that the Tory boys had picked the quarrel with the patriots.

"You did just right in knocking them down!" was the cry, and so hostile were the looks, actions and words of the crowd, that Zeke and Lem on scrambling to their feet, did not renew the fight. They shook their fists at Dick and Tom, however, and muttered threats, as they moved away through the crowd declaring that they would get even with Dick and Tom.

The patriot youths received the congratulations and commendations of the people in their vicinity with becoming modesty, and a little later moved on up the street.

They walked about for an hour or more, after that, and then took up their station as near the old State House as they could. There was such an immense crowd there that it was impossible to get within half a block of the building. In the steeple of the State House was a bell, and the old bell-ringer sat beside it, waiting for the moment when his son, stationed below, should give him word that the Declaration had been adopted, when he would ring the bell. He had been stationed there since morning, waiting, waiting, and as the day wore away and still the word to ring came not, he shook his head and muttered that they would never reach a favorable conclusion.

But he was mistaken, for when evening was almost at hand, his son came rushing out of the State House and called up eagerly and excitedly:

“They've done it, father! They've adopted and signed the Declaration of Independence! Ring the bell! Ring it, father! Ring the bell! Ring it—quick!”

With a glad cry, the old man leaped up, forgetting his rheumatism in his excitement and delight, and seizing the great iron clapper, swung it back and forth against the sides of the great brass bell, thus causing it to do what by a strange coincidence the inscription on its side said it was to do, viz.: “Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.”

## CHAPTER II

### WAYLAID ON THE ROAD

AS the deep tones of the old bell died away on the evening air a great shout of delight went up from the people on the streets. They leaped and danced for joy. They tossed their hats in the air. They shouted and sang. Many wept for joy. It was an exciting, a thrilling manifestation.

Dick and Tom Dare were not a whit behind any in their expressions of delight. They shouted for joy, and then in the excess of their happiness they threw their arms around each other in a bearlike hug.

"Oh, Dick, I'm so glad!" cried Tom. "I never was so happy in my life."

"Nor I, Tom. This is the most joyous hour of my life! How delighted father will be when we go home and tell him that it is settled, that the Declaration of Independence is a real and determined fact!"

"It will please him more than anything else in the world, Dick."

"Yes, yes indeed."

Then lifting up his voice the patriot youth cried out loudly, his voice ringing clear as the notes of a bugle:

"Down with the king! Long live Liberty! Long live Washington!"

The excitement was even greater after that, and instantly the cry was taken up on every hand. Thousands shouted aloud, in a thrilling, triumphant roar: "Down with the king! Long live Liberty! Long live Washington!"

People leaped and danced, and shouted till they were hoarse. They were like crazy people, but with them it was pure joy because of the thought that they were to be free, to be their own masters,

independent of a tyrannical king. They had reason to be joyous and happy.

It was certainly a great day for the American people—without doubt the greatest in the history of the greatest country on the face of the Globe.

After awhile, when the people had calmed down to a considerable extent and were beginning to disperse to their homes, Dick and Tom Dare set their faces homeward. They were soon at the river, and crossing on the ferry, walked swiftly along the road. They were eager to get back and tell their father the glad, the glorious news.

Part of the way the road led through a heavy growth of timber, and as Dick and Tom were making their way past this point, talking enthusiastically of what they had seen in the city, and never thinking that danger might lurk near, they were suddenly set upon by four youths of about their own age—no others, in fact, than Zeke Boggs, Lem Hicks and two other Tory sympathisers of the neighborhood.

“We told ye we'd git even with ye!” hissed Zeke Boggs, as they hurled themselves upon Dick and Tom. “Ye thought ye was mighty smart, there in Phillydelphy, with ever'buddy on yer side an' ag'in us, but heer its different an' we'll beat ye till ye'll wish ye had never been born! Go fur 'em, fellers!” this last to his companions.

The two patriot youths, although taken by surprise, and outnumbered two to one, were yet not dismayed, for they were brave lads, and they fought the Tory youths with all their might, so fiercely, in fact, that they held their own remarkably well. They knocked down each of the four young Tories, and gave them a thumping that they would likely remember for some time. Of course, they got hit a number of times by the youths, but they did not mind it, the smart of the blows only serving to make them settle down to their work with increased vim and determination, and the result was that the Tory ruffians presently got enough of it, and suddenly ceasing the attack and dashing in among the trees at the roadside, disappeared from view, leaving Dick and Tom Dare masters of the situation.

“Phew, that was warm work, Dick!” said Tom, wiping his perspiring face with his handkerchief.

"Yes, so it was, Tom," replied his brother. "But I believe that we made it warmer for Zeke and his gang than they did for us."

"Yes, I think we did," with a chuckle. "Say, Dick, they are better runners than fighters, aren't they!"

"I think they are, Tom. They did some lively sprinting, just now, at any rate."

"I guess they won't be likely to attack us again, soon."

"Hardly."

Dick and Tom now resumed their journey homeward, and reached there about half an hour later. It was still light enough to see their father at work in the backyard, as they entered the front gate. They ran around the house at the top of their speed, to halt a few moments later in front of their father.

"They did it, father!" exclaimed Tom, pantingly. "They adopted and signed the Declaration of Independence."

"Say you so, my son?" exclaimed Mr. Dare joyously. "Well, heaven be praised! I am glad, my sons; yes, very, very glad! It means much to everybody, and to young people like yourselves more than to older ones, for you have practically the whole of your lives before you, while we older people have already lived the greater portion of the time allotted to us."

"It was wonderful, the interest and excitement shown by the people in Philadelphia, father!" said Dick. "They were wild with delight."

"I have no doubt of it, my son. And they had reason to be delighted. It is a great thing to feel free and independent. I feel wonderfully relieved already. I feel as if shackles had suddenly been stricken from my limbs, and I have no doubt that is the way the majority of the people look at the matter, so why should they not feel joyous?"

The three then entered the house, Mr. Dare having finished his work for the evening, and Mrs. Dare greeted her sons affectionately.

"The Declaration of Independence has been adopted, wife," said Mr. Dare, joyously. "The die is cast. There will be war now, un-

doubtedly, and it will result in the independence of the people of America. It cannot result otherwise, for the people will fight to the death. In the words of Patrick Henry, it will be with them, 'Give me liberty, or give me death!'"

"I am glad, Henry," said Mrs. Dare. "I am glad, and almost sorry, as well, for-I am afraid it will take you from me. You will want to enter the army, I am afraid."

"Oh, I must do so, wife," earnestly. "Every man should step to the front and shoulder a musket and fight for liberty. Yes, I must go to the war, mother. I must join the Continental Army at once."

"I feared it," sighed the woman. "But, I shall try to be brave and bear up well, for I know that it is the right thing for you to do. I would not want you to stay at home, when you were needed at the front to help fight the minions of King George."

"Spoken like my own true-hearted wife!" said Mr. Dare. "I knew you would look at the matter that way, dear."

At this moment there came a knock on the back-door, and when Mrs. Dare opened it, she saw a neighbor, Abe Boggs, the father of Zeke, standing there. This man was an avowed Tory, who was vehement in his declarations of allegiance to the king, and who had been heard often to viciously proclaim that all who were not in favor of the king, were traitors and that they ought to be hung. Knowing this, and instinctively disliking the man because she knew he was vicious and bad, Mrs. Dare's heart sank when she saw who was standing there.

The fact was, that the Dares lived right in the midst of a Tory neighborhood; that is the six or seven nearest neighbors were adherents of the king, and they neighbored among themselves, and would not have anything to do with the Dares. This did not bother the patriot family, however, for they did not like the Tory families anyway. Mr. Dare often met one or more of the men, when going about his work, however, and frequently he had arguments with them. As he was a brave man, and frank-spoken as he was brave, he always told the Tories just what he thought of their king, and thus he had angered them many times, and they had learned to hate him. Only his fearlessness, and the fact that he was known to be a dan-

gerous man to interfere with, had saved him from rough treatment at the hands of the Tories.

"Good evenin', Mrs. Dare," said Boggs, ducking his head. "Tell yer husban' to come out here; we'd like to see 'im."

Mrs. Dare glanced out into the yard, and her heart gave a leap, and then sank as she saw several of their Tory neighbors sanding in a group a few yards from the house. She noted, with a feeling of fear gripping her heart, that two or three of them had rifles in their hands.

"W-what do you want, Mr. Boggs?" she asked, her voice trembling. "My husband is here, but-but-we were just going to eat supper, and—"

"Supper can wait a few minutes, wife," said Mr. Dare. "I'll see what neighbor Boggs wants. Won't you come in, Abe?"

"No, we wanter see ye out here, Dare" replied the Tory. "Come out uv doors. We won't keep ye but a minnet."

"Oh, husband, be careful!" whispered Mrs. Dare in her husband's ear as he passed her. "Don't anger them. They have weapons in their hands, and—" With a smile and a reassuring glance Mr. Dare passed on out, closing the door behind him. He had no fear whatever of his Tory neighbors, and would have scoffed at the idea of their trying to do him injury.

Dick and Tom were washing their faces and hands and combing their hair, and did not know anything about the coming of the Tories until they entered the room where their mother was, and then Mr. Dare had been out in the yard perhaps five minutes. During this time Mrs. Dare had been on the anxious seat, so to speak. She had been listening eagerly and anxiously, fearing she might hear rifle-shots, or the sound of a struggle, but no such sounds had come to her hearing. Still, she was not feeling very much reassured when the boys entered the room, and she told them about the coming of Abe Boggs and some more of the neighbors, and how they had called Mr. Dare out, on the plea of wishing to speak to him.

"He's been out there quite a while," Mrs. Dare finished; "and I'm beginning to feel uneasy. I wish you would go out and tell father to come in, that supper is getting cold, Dick."

"Certainly, mother," said Dick, and he hastened to the door. The truth was, that a feeling of uneasiness had taken hold upon him when he heard what his mother had to say about the Tories, and, remembering the trouble he and Tom had had with Zeke Boggs and his cronies that afternoon in Philadelphia and on the road home, Dick was led to fear that the Tories had called his father out of doors with evil intent.

He opened the door and stepped quickly out, and Tom, who had also been assailed with fears for his father's safety, was close at his heels. They looked all around, but to their surprise, and to their alarm as well, there was no one in sight. Neither their father nor the Tories could be seen anywhere. It was so dark that the youths could not see any very great distance with distinctness, but they were confident that there was nobody in the back yard.

"They're around in the front yard, likely, Dick," said Tom, but his tone lacked positiveness. It was evident that he had fears that such was not really the case.

The two hastened around the house, accompanied by their mother, who had followed them to the door and had, like her sons, noted that there was nobody to be seen. And when they reached the front yard, they saw it was the same there: Not a soul was in the front yard. The Tories, and Mr. Dare as well, had disappeared.

"Oh, where can they be?" cried Mrs. Dare, almost at the weeping point. "What have they done with your father? Oh, I am afraid they have wrought him injury of some kind, sons!"

The youths were alarmed, but they pretended that such was not the case, in order to reassure their mother. They said that their father was all right.

"He has gone with them, to see about something," said Dick. "You go back in the house, mother, and Tom and I will go over to Mr. Boggs and see what has become of father. Likely he is there. You go in and stay with Mary. We won't be gone long."

"Very well, Dick," said Mrs. Dare; "but hurry, for I shall be anxious till you get back with your father."

She entered the house, and Dick and Tom hastened over to the Boggs home, which was less than a quarter mile distant. Mr. Dare was not there, and Mrs. Boggs said she did not know where her husband was, that he had left the house an hour or more before, saying he did not know when he would be back. Thanking her for the information, Dick and Tom hastened to the homes of several of the neighboring Tories in succession, and made inquiries regarding Mr. Dare, but with the same result as at the Boggs home. In none of the homes visited were any of the men of the house, and the women did not know where the men were.

Greatly worried now, but hoping they would find their father at home when they got there, Dick and Tom hastened back, and as they approached the house, they caught sight of something white on the door. When they reached the door, they found it was a piece of paper, and on taking this into the house discovered it was a rudely scrawled note, signed by Abe Boggs and six of his Tory neighbors. The note read as follows:

"To Mrs. Dare and rebel sons, Dick and Tom:

"We hev took Henry Dare prisner. He is a rebel, an we are goin ter turn him over to Captain Wilson an his compny uv British sojers, who hev ben heer fur a week past, an are goin to jine the main army on Long Island to-night. Ye kaint do nothin to git him back, so ye needn try. An ye two boys, Dick an Tom, had better be keerful er we'll serve ye worsen whut we hev yer father. We don't aim ter hev any rebels in our neighborhood. So, Dick and Tom Dare, hev a care!"

"Oh, husband is a prisoner in the hands of the British!" wailed Mrs. Dare. "Oh, this is terrible, boys! What shall we do? Oh, what shall we do!"

"Don't be frightened, mother," said Dick, soothingly. "I don't think father is in any danger. He is a prisoner, true, but the British don't kill prisoners, and sooner or later father will escape-or be rescued. That will be work for Tom and I, mother!" his eyes lighting up. "We will make it our object in life to rescue father and get him back home here, with you, mother."

The poor woman was not greatly comforted, however, and she shook her head, at the same time saying, in a hopeless tone of voice:

"What could you do, you are only a couple of boys? You could not possibly rescue father. It is useless to think of such a thing. Oh, I greatly fear I shall never see my husband again in this world! Oh, those terrible, cowardly Tories!" The good woman gave way to an outburst of uncontrollable grief.

"Yes, you shall see father again, mother," declared Dick, decidedly. "Don't worry. He is safe from personal harm, and sooner or later we will succeed in getting him located and will rescue him. Tom and I will make that our object in life."

"Yes, yes, mother," said Tom eagerly. "We'll join the patriot army, if need be, to further our ends, and while fighting for Liberty and Independence, and aiding our country in that manner, we will at the same time be on the lookout to find father and rescue him."

"Yes, that is what we will do," said Dick. "Father would have joined the patriot army if he had not been captured and taken away by the Tories, and now that he is not able to do that, we will do it in his stead. I know it is what father would wish us to do, and as Tom says, it will give us a better chance to find and rescue father."

"Oh, my sons, my sons! How can I spare you, too?" murmured Mrs. Dare. "How can I let you leave me, now that I have lost your dear father!"

"It will be only temporary, mother. You can see, when you give the matter more thought, that it is the best thing to do."

"Perhaps so, Dick, darling," acquiesced Mrs. Dare, "but it is hard!"

Throwing their arms about their mother's neck, the youths kissed her, and presently she grew more calm.

## CHAPTER III

### BEN FOSTER BRINGS IMPORTANT NEWS

“OH, Dick, is it true that you and Tom are going to enter the army and fight for liberty?”

“Yes, it is true, Elsie. Aren't you glad?”

“Y-yes, Dick,” replied Elsie Foster, hesitatingly. “I'm glad you are to be a soldier, but I-well, you might get killed you know, and-and-”

“Would you care, Elsie?”

Elsie Foster was the daughter of Robert Foster, the nearest neighbor of the Dares. Mr. Foster was a king's man, but he was different from the other Tories of the neighborhood, in that he was an honest, honorable man, and was a friend of the Dares. He had had nothing to do with the capture of Mr. Dare, and was outspoken in his denunciation of his Tory neighbors for the deed they had committed.

Dick had gone over to the Foster home to borrow something for his mother, and had met Elsie out in the yard, and the girl had greeted Dick as above. The truth was that Dick and Elsie were great friends. They were school-mates, and whenever there was anything going on in the neighborhood, such as spelling schools, skating parties, etc., Dick was Elsie's companion. Elsie was seventeen, and she had a brother, Ben, he being her twin, and a sister, Lucy, aged fifteen. The three young folks of the Dare family and the three of the Foster family often got together of evenings and had a pleasant time, but now that Dick and Tom were going away to the war, it would break into this arrangement.

When Dick asked Elsie if she would care if he should get killed in battle, she blushed and looked confused at first, and then she looked him frankly in the eyes and said, softly. “You know I would, Dick.”

“I'm glad to know that, Elsie,” said Dick, earnestly.

At this moment Ben Foster came running up. He was a manly-looking youth, and was lively and jolly as a rule. But now he was very sober-looking, for he realized that Dick, whose father had been captured by the Tories only the day before, was in no mood for jollity. There was an eager expression on Ben's face, however, and after greeting Dick, he asked:

"Are you really going to join the Continental army, Dick, you and Tom!"

"Yes, Ben," was the reply.

"Well, say, I'm going to go with you," declared Ben.

"Oh, Ben!" exclaimed Elsie. "What will father say?"

"Father's all right, sis. He is a king's man, everybody knows that, but he is reasonable, and lets other people think as they like. He knows that I'm a patriot, and he won't object."

Dick's face lighted up, for he liked Ben very much, and the idea of having him along was a pleasing one.

"That would be fine, Ben," he said. "But I wouldn't want you to do anything contrary to the wishes of your father."

"Oh, that will be all right," Ben assured him. "He won't care, I am sure."

"Goodness, what will Mary do if you go away?" said Elsie. Ben seemed to think as much of Mary Dare as Dick did of Elsie, and he flushed slightly at his sister's words, and then retorted:

"I guess she'll do about the same thing that you will when Dick goes-go up into the attic and have a good cry."

"You're a mean brother," said Elsie in pretended anger, lifting her hand as if to slap him, "and if it wasn't that I will likely soon lose you, I would box your ears soundly."

They talked awhile, and then Dick attended to the errand that had brought him there and went home.

"I guess we will have company when we go to war, Tom" he said to his brother.

"Is that so?" with an interested ear. "Who?"