**The Hummer Bell - History**

Questions about the survival and present location of the Hummer bell have puzzled historians and others interested in its fate for nearly two centuries. The following narrative offers answers to this question. It is based in large part on a 2019 article titled "The Nauvoo Temple Bells" by Shannon Tracy, Glen Leonard and Ronald Watt. It appears in, BYU Studies Quarterly; Vol. 58: Iss. 2, Article 5.

This narrative begins with the unsuccessful attempt by Rev. Micheal Hummer to remove the bell from the belfry of the First Presbyterian Church in Iowa City. His intent was to take it in partial payment for unpaid salary owed to him by the Iowa City church. That effort was foiled by alert townspeople including David Lamoreux, James Miller, A. B. Newcomb, and Eli Meyer who loaded the bell onto Meyer's wagon and drove North to near the confluence of the Iowa River and Rapid Creek. They then attached the bell to a large chain, anchored it to an elm tree near the riverbank, and sank the bell in the river. According to sequent account, the intent was to secure the bell until differences between Church trustees and Hummer were resolved. When attempting to retrieve the bell all that was found was a chain attached to the elm tree. Some believed that the bell had washed down the river, others that it sank to a watery grave. Hummer, however, believed no such thing. He consulted his medium and was informed that it had been dropped in a well eight miles to the west. The search, of course, proved fruitless.

Lamoreux states in his memoir, that on April 15, 1850, he and James Miller, Eli Meyer and A. B. Newcombe secretly retrieved the Hummer bell from the Iowa River, secured it in a box, loaded it in Newcombe's wagon and headed west. Because Lamoreux was a Latter Day Saint They joined Shadrach Roundy's freight company bound for Salt Lake City, arriving on September 10, 1850. Newcombe, Meyers, Miller, and Lamrouex wintered there along with the bell. The following February, negotiations between the Morman tithing clerk+ Asa Calkins, and the Iowa City party realized $600 for the Hummer bell.

A preceding event in Nauvoo, Illinois, was critical to the Hummer bell story. In 1846, the Morman's were driven from Nauvoo and their temple destroyed. Prior to that destruction the temple bell was saved and transported to Salt Lake City. It arrived in mid-September 1847, two years before the Hummer bell. The Nauvoo bell was mounted on a post in Temple Square and its chimes called the faithful to worship. It cracked during the hard winter of 1849-50 and an attempt to recast was unsuccessful. The remains of the Nauvoo bell were destroyed in the process.

The Hummer bell remained in storage in the tithing house from 1870 until 1909. By that time oral documentation provided in 1895 by General Irish and his party from Iowa City, of the bell's identify apparently was not recorded and consequently was lost in the mists of time. Now labeled the "Old Bell" it was placed on exhibit in the Morman Historical Chamber. The caption further stated that had been brought to Utah in the early days and had been used to summon people to public assemblies and that, "for a long time it was the only large bell in Utah".

A defining event in 1939 merged the paths of the two bells. Joseph J. Cannon, president of the Temple Square Mission, "rediscovered" the Nauvoo bell in the basement of the Bureau of Information " on Temple Square. The "Deseret News" reported that the Nauvoo Temple Bell will ring again, even though faintly visible markings identified the bell otherwise. After many delays, the bell went on display in Temple Square in September 1966. At that time advice was given not to claim that the bell had rung in

Nauvoo, which was ignored in favor of the belief that this bell had been recast using remnants of the original Nauvoo bell.

Church-owned radio and T-V stations began using the chime of the Hummer bell to announce the beginning of each hour. After the Church History Department revealed the bell's true identity, the Nauvoo reference was quietly omitted from the announcement of the hour. This progression of events prompted further discussion of the fate of the Hummer bell resulting in its removal from the Temple Square campanile and offer for its return to First Presbyterian Church in Iowa City. In its December 2023 meeting the Session of First Presbyterian Church accepted the gracious offer of the return of the Hummer bell. We are deeply thankful that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter- Day Saints for making it possible to allow the Hummer bell to once again ring in celebration of God's Holy Name in its intended home.

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