

REV. J. P. SCHELL  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
ERIE, NORTH DAKOTA

June 1/11.

Rev. D.W. Wylie, D.D.,

Iowa City, Io.,

My dear Dr. Wylie:-

I see from reports received that a history of the Hummer bell was read at the late anniversary of the founding of the Presbyterian church of Iowa City, and that a letter from the secretary of the Mormon President Smith, emphatically denying that the bell was ever "stolen" by them, or that it was now or ever had been in Salt Lake City! ~~was also read.~~ I notice, also, what the editor of the Press says in regard to the account given of the bell, that neither he nor hundreds of others had been able to discriminate between "truth and fiction" in the same.

Now I am fully persuaded that the account I furnished, and which I first prepared some thirty years ago, can be relied upon as faithfully accurate in all essential respects; altho if corroborative evidence were demanded, I might not be able to furnish it now. However, if my word could be relied upon, I could give my affidavit to the fact ~~that~~ (1) that about 1869-70 a party from Iowa City, crossing the continent to San Francisco, did report to the officials of the church that they had visited in Salt Lake City, and had discovered the old Iowa City bell in one of Brigham Young's buildings--a private school house of his, as I understood it. (2) As a result of the correspondence had with reference to the matter, I remember distinctly of hearing Dr. Samuel O Osmond, the pastor of the church, read a letter he had received from President Young, which did not deny the fact that the bell was there; but stipulated such a price for its surrender, as appeared to our people virtually prohibitive. I think some of the early members of the church will remember these things--Mrs. Sharpless, possibly. (3)

(a Miss Ann Hughes)  
( " Mrs. Craft, )



(3) Then, as stated in the narrative referred to, while serving as a missionary in a Utah Mining camp, in 1873-4, I met <sup>George,</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> elder brother of Brigham Young, who was visiting a portion of his family residing in the camp at the time. In conversation with him, I found that he was familiar with the history of the bell, especially with the latter portion thereof. It was from him that I received the information concerning its removal from the Iowa river, and also its subsequent history, such as I have faithfully recorded in the narrative. He never intimated that the bell was not actually in Salt Lake City, and in the possession of his brother Brigham. The question was not raised between us. And as I had just secured the erection of a presbyterian church building in the camp, and complete with the exception of a bell, I addressed a letter to his brother Brigham, making a strong plea that the old bell be ~~returned~~ over to me for use in our new mountain chapel. And this letter I placed in the brother's hands to be presented to him. Whether he ever presented the letter to Brigham, as he promised me he would do, I am unable to say; but word was conveyed to me thro the members of his family some days later, that his brother Brigham had placed a price on it that made it also prohibitive for us, and we secured a bell from another source, donated by the Blymyers of Cincinnati, and which at that time rang from the highest belfry in the world. *(Call. with Elmer - 9,000 ft)*

Well, it seems you now have my word, based on direct statements by a leading Mormon who knew, against the mere assertion of the present President's Secretary. I have been in the missionary work of our church since 1871, and I do not know that my word has been called in question heretofore.

Very Respectfully

and faithfully yours,

