

And he was bound to have it-and he knew he could succeed.

# A PIONEER BELL

By Rev. J. P. Schell, (From Des Moines Register-Leader)  
of May 14, 1911 (maybe)  
Abbreviated, retold by Rev. J. Kirkwood Craig, D.D.

of Franklin, N.H. Grandson of John Shoup,  
and namesake of Gov. Samuel J. Kirkwood.

Among my earliest recollections of my childhood are the tones of the village bell, calling us on Sabbath mornings to the house of God. It was cast at Troy--and bore on its margin "First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City" -- There can be little doubt that it was the first bell that ever sounded the gospel call in any inland town of all that vast wonderland of modern achievement and missionary enterprise lying north of the 40th. meridian and west of the father of waters.

A year or two after its introduction trouble arose in the church and the eccentric pastor, instead of seeking the peace of this little Zion, appeared to be the chief fomentor of discord. There was serious disagreement in regard to his salary which resulted in his claiming the bell. He disappeared from town for a while, returning soon after for the purpose of securing his prize. He dined at his Aunts home that day in the immediate vicinity of the Church. From his conversation she guessed his object. While he and a trusted assistant proceeded to the church with a ladder she hastily notified the church officers and through them to the town. The ladder was soon hoisted, but while he was engaged in removing the bell an energetic crowd of citizens gathered below.

The bell was lowered, loaded into a wagon, and rapidly driven away. The ladder was removed, leaving the enraged parson wildly gesticulating from his tower pulpit. From his lofty perch he saw his coveted prize swiftly receding in the distance and also the bent form of "Elder Shoup" retaining his position in the wagon as if glued to the bell.

Many years after the event the writer (Rev. J. P. Schell) chanced to meet him -referring to the event he (Rev. Hummer) exclaimed "That bell, that bell, I yet shall ring that bell through heaven, earth and hell".

Then pausing he added "Those villians, how they robbed me. And there was old Elder Shoup who always used to pray 'Lord wake us out of this 'lethargetic sleep'. Well when I saw him in that wagon, holding on to that bell, if I were only in that wagon with him I would have answered his prayer for him. I would have waked him out of his lethargetic sleep. (Lethargic was what he meant)

This verse by the "poet laureate" of the place quaintly describes the episode. (Poet laureate is not named)

"In the Presbyterian Church pretty high up in the steeple, Hung a loud-sounding bell, to call together all the people, That bell was held in high esteem by all who knew its sound; It rang so loud it could be heard for many miles around.

The minister there who labored did not exactly suit  
The people thought the'd let him slide, but he was rather cute  
And did not get his salary, for which they had agreed

And he was bound to have it-and he knew he could succeed.

For he had formed a plan which to Margrave he did tell  
He would ascend the steeple and let down that hamsome bell  
So he mounted a long ladder, and climbed through the steeple door  
And soon the bell came rushing down and landed on the floor.

Then followed fast his trouble, for the ladder was taken away  
And he was up in the steeple-and there he had to stay  
And there he preached a sermon- far louder than before  
Some said he threatened vengeance, and others said he swore.

For Manfleit had sent a wagon and the bell was loaded in  
And the driver never reckoned he'd committed any sin.  
He took the bell to a rapid stream and sank it very deep  
And there for months the bell remained, while Hummer was left  
to weep.

An ill wind may sometime prove to be a very advantageous  
gale, A poor lad on the outskirts of the crowd reproduced the  
scene on a piece of old brown paper, which was exhibited in a  
shop window. A member of the legislature, then in session,  
discerning marks of ability in the rude lines, sough out the  
author, undertook his education and later sent him to Italy  
to study art. He achæved an enviable record, returned later  
to claim the hand of one of the fair daughters of his native  
town. His "sketches" are still carefully preserved in the  
State Historical rooms. (Name not given, nor the name of bride).

The bell was first deposited in the channel of the River,  
later removed, and its subsequent history was for a long time  
a profound secret.

After the lapse of more than twenty years, upon the comple-  
tion of the Pacific Railroad, some parties crossing the conti-  
nent stopped off at Salt Lake City. There they discovered the  
bell surmounting the private school house of the Mormon prophet,  
and upon its margin "First Presbyterian Church, Iowa City, 1846".  
Church officers in Iowa City were notified, measures were taken  
to have the lost bell restored to its former honorable position  
no rival having been permitted to occupy its place. Correspondence  
was opened with Mormon authorities but so high was the value  
placed upon it as a spoil taken from the gentiles that strangely  
enough it was decided to let the old bell remain, a voiceless  
trophy in the far off land of its capitivity.

A brother of the Mormon president revealed some interesting  
intervening history of the bell namely- A man in Iowa City who  
became interested in the Mormons and had developed a dislike  
for the Presbyterians(not named)- disclosed the hiding place  
of the bell. It was conveyed to the vicinity of Bloomington  
~~Ill.~~, now Muskatine, on the banks of the Mississippi River, and  
there deposited in a stream known as Devil's Creek. Thence it  
was carried to to a point near Montrose, Ill. and burried in  
the sand, where it remained for some years. It was brought by  
the Mormons to Kaneshville, near Council Bluffs, from which  
it was conveyed to its present resting place. (May, 1911)??

It is affirmed that this venerable bell has long been cracked, and has lost its tongue as if unwilling to "sing the Lords praises in a strange land". Grand old bell! Alas that it should be suffered to remain in alien hands.

No doubt this Rev. J.P. Schell, is a son or grandson of the ~~\*J. Schell\*~~ "Joseph Schell listed among the first elders elected September 12, 1840. (see One Hundred Years of Presbyterianism in Iowa City, 1840-1940, page (12). I know not his authority-

J. Kirkwood Craig,  
Grandson of John Shoup  
id- page 7, last line.

I doubt the accuracy of the first statement at the top of this page. My older Sister, Mrs. Myrtle Craig Roberts-Marley lived in Salt Lake City from about 1910- until her death- 1934. Soon after New Years of 1927 she sent to me a copy of a paper in which there was an article in a Salt Lake Paper under the caption "NEW YEAR'S DAY RECALLS THREE BELLS OF OLDEN TIMES"

"Rang out the glad tidings During Pioneer Days; Now Repose among the Relics of Utah"

(I quote in part as follows)--

"Probably the most unique history is recalled by the bell at the bureau of information, which to old timers is known as the "Hummer Bell". First record of it being hung in the steeple of the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City, by Rev. Edward Hummer. Rev. Hummer disagreed with his flock, argued and left the parish. He endeavored to take the bell, claimed it was his, but the parishioners objected, took the bell and sunk it in the Iowa River, with the intention of replacing it when the trouble subsided. The "hide-and-seekers" did not cover their tracks. Several days later the bell was found and sold to the pioneers who were beginning their long march to Utah. The pioneers took pride in the bell and constructed a special wagon to bear it. The bell was used by the pioneers for several years. In the early sixties, Iowans discovered the bell in Salt Lake and attempted to buy it from the church. Negotiations ended when the parties failed to agree upon a price. Since then the bell has remained in its place at the bureau of information.

While in Salt Lake City in 1928 I visited the Bureau of Information, inspected the various bells, tapped them with a knife and took a picture of the bell, which to my ear had the nicest tone. Since my visit to Iowa City May 18, 1941 I have compared my snap shot with the picture of the Hummer Bell, and from the rings near the top and near the bottom, I am quite sure I got my prize--viz., a picture of the Hummer Bell, my maternal grand-father, Elder John Shoup helped to rescue from an exatatic preacher, Rev. M. Hummer.

Since reading the "One Hundred Years of Presbyterianism in Iowa City" I have learned a lot about my grand father I never knew before.

Signed  
by

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10 View Street,  
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