

The Nauvoo Temple Bells

Shannon M. Tracy, Glen M. Leonard, and Ronald G. Watt

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June 27, 2002. Nauvoo, Illinois. 6:00 p.m. Six long chimes ring from a bell located within the Nauvoo Temple tower to signal the first of many dedicatory services for the newly rebuilt Nauvoo Temple. The sound seems to announce a rebirth of dreams long wanting to be fulfilled. Now, for the first time in over a century and a half, a bell rings in the dedicated house of the Lord that sits atop the bluff overlooking the neatly planned streets of the lower city. As was its predecessor, this temple was built for the perfecting of the Saints in the household of faith. It was erected to help establish the knowledge of eternity. It was fashioned to house revelations for its patrons concerning what steps they should take toward eternal life, what knowledge they should gain, and what covenants they should make. The bell heralds a renewed temple of the Lord.¹

But this is not just any temple. This is the temple in the City of Joseph, the “City Beautiful.” Nauvoo, Illinois, was a place of hoped-for rest and peace. It was a center for the stakes of Zion, a place where weary Saints

1. See Doctrine and Covenants 124:39–41, 55; Ephesians 2:19–22; and Gerry Avant, “Nauvoo Temple Stands as a Memorial,” *Deseret News*, Church News, July 6, 2002. The bell was installed July 3, 2001. R. Scott Lloyd, “Bronze Bell to Be Distinctive Feature on Nauvoo Temple,” *Deseret News*, Church News, July 3, 2001.

gathered to find safety from a world that did not accept them. Nauvoo's citizens had struggled to forge a community from a soggy bottomland into a Jeffersonian-style city. They charted out its coordinates along compass points as true and square as the doctrines that they espoused. But the Saints would not be able to enjoy their beautiful city for long. In less than seven years after Nauvoo's establishment, its founder and mayor would be martyred and its citizens would be expelled from the city they had built. They found buyers for the better homes and farms at drastically reduced prices but abandoned the rest, along with barns, land, and personal possessions. They would flee across the Mississippi River with barely enough to survive and the hope of a safe home far away in the West. And they would take with them their temple bell.²

For everything that the Saints of Zion gave up when they left Nauvoo, the bell—and Brigham Young's promise to replace the building in whose tower it hung—served in part to represent their hopes for the future. The bell also became an anchor, a remembrance of things past and a symbol of dreams yet to come. This chapter will recount the histories of the old Nauvoo Temple bells—yes, two bells bore that name—and examine the various stories of the original bell and its substitute, with their colorful heritage.

The First Nauvoo Temple Bell

When the Prophet Joseph Smith announced plans to build a temple in Nauvoo, he made it clear that the Lord said it was to be built by the sacrifices of the Saints.³ This was not a casual statement. Many of the people of Nauvoo had recently escaped Missouri and had lost everything. Now they were required to build a house to the Lord where the covenants and ordinances of perfection could be administered. A tenth of all they possessed was to be given to begin the construction process, and then they were to donate a tenth of their increase and their time for the temple's completion. Financial aspects of this tithing applied to the entire church, not just Nauvoo's citizens.⁴

2. See Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002).

3. "Minutes of the General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Held in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Ill. Oct. 3rd 1840," *Times and Seasons* 1 (October 1840): 186; First Presidency, "A Proclamation, to the Saints Scattered Abroad," *Times and Seasons* 2 (January 15, 1841): 277.

4. Doctrine and Covenants 119.

After construction was underway, it was decided to hang a bell in a tower atop the temple. Martha Jane Knowlton reported Joseph Smith's explanation in an 1843 discourse. The Prophet said, "We will build upon the top of this Temple a great observatory[,] a great and high watch tower[,] and in the top thereof we will Suspend a tremendous bell that when it is rung shall rouse the inhabitants of Madison[,] wake up the people of Warsaw[,] and sound in the ears of men [in] Carthage."⁵

The idea of a temple bell was not new. The Kirtland Temple plans called for a bell that never materialized. In January 1836, William W. Phelps wrote to his wife, Sally Phelps, "A great effort is now about to be made to procure a 'bell' for the Lord's house."⁶ Similar intentions are found in plans for an earlier temple in a central block of the plat of the City of Zion, in Jackson County, Missouri. In a letter dated June 25, 1833, Joseph Smith wrote, "A belfry is to be in the east end, and a bell of very large size."⁷

The Nauvoo Temple would become the first and (to date) the last house of the Lord with a bell in its steeple. In the late spring of 1845, nearly a year after Joseph's death, the governing Quorum of the Twelve Apostles asked English members to consider contributing something substantial toward the construction of the temple. The request, signed by Brigham Young as quorum president and directed to British Mission President Wilford Woodruff, was to provide a bell for the temple. In their letter of May 8, 1845, the Twelve wrote: "We have thought it might be very agreeable to the feelings of the English Saints to furnish a bell for the temple, if this is their pleasure, you can forward it [at] the first conveyance, and we will have it hung as the building is going up. We are but little acquainted with the weight of bells: we have thought of

5. Dean C. Jessee, "Joseph Smith's 19 July 1840 Discourse," reported by Martha Jane Knowlton and Howard Coray, *BYU Studies* 19, no. 3 (1979): 393. We have used the more likely date for the Knowlton-Coray manuscript, October 5, 1843; see "Howard and Martha Cory Notebook," in *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 417–18 n. 1.

6. William W. Phelps to Sally Phelps, January 1836, W. W. Phelps Letters, 1835–1841, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

7. "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834]," 309, The Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/315>; James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 1:10.

2000 lbs. weight, but we leave this to your judgment. We want one that can be heard night or day.”⁸

Woodruff published the council’s letter in the mission’s monthly magazine, the *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*, and urged the members to respond to his call. Here was a clear way for the Saints living abroad to assist in Joseph Smith’s call to build a temple. In August 1845, an editorial in the *Star* stated that all further donations from the British Saints would be used to obtain the bell and also a clock for the Nauvoo Temple. Woodruff instructed branch leaders to send their contributions directly to him. When contributions for the bell lagged, he announced in September that he would no longer distinguish between contributions for the temple and for the temple bell. “We shall make use of all funds collected for the Temple to pay for the Bell until a sufficiency is procured.”⁹

Meanwhile, in mid-September, a group of Hancock County, Illinois, residents who wanted to rid the region of Latter-day Saints launched a campaign of harassment and arson that forced the Latter-day Saint farmers to abandon their properties and move into Nauvoo. Sometime later, Brigham Young informed Woodruff of a change in plans. Woodruff should now forward the money collected for the bell to Nauvoo. Apparently, Young heard nothing back from Woodruff; so, in December, Young repeated the request with a new sense of urgency: “I wrote you in my last letter that we intended to purchase the bell in this country and desired you to transmit the money collected for that purpose by the first safe opportunity. I feel as ever anxious this should be done.”¹⁰

During the week before Young sent his reminder notice, he dedicated the attic story and began the ordinance work for Nauvoo’s Latter-day Saints. Wagon shops were at work preparing for the removal of thousands of people. Why import a large bell from England or even purchase one stateside for a building that would be left behind six months later? Would a smaller bell serve the temporary needs? One can only remember the commitment of the Saints to *complete* the edifice as commanded by the Lord, “that you may prove yourselves unto me that ye are

8. Brigham Young to Wilford Woodruff, May 8, 1845, in *Millennial Star* 6 (July 15, 1845): 42–43, original at Church History Library.

9. *Millennial Star* 6 (July 15, 1845): 43; *Millennial Star* 6 (August 15, 1845): 77; *Millennial Star* 6 (September 15, 1845): 107; “This Week in Church History: 150 Years Ago,” *Deseret News*, Church News, May 20, 1995.

10. Brigham Young to Wilford Woodruff, December 19, 1845, Brigham Young Papers, Church History Library.

faithful in all things whatsoever I command you, that I may bless you, and crown you with honor, immortality, and eternal life.”¹¹

In January 1846, as Wilford Woodruff was making plans to leave Great Britain, he informed the British members that “some £220 has been donated since we called for assistance for the bell and clock.” He encouraged the Saints to continue their efforts in collecting funds for the bell. Donations for the temple received by Woodruff and Reuben Hedlock, who succeeded Woodruff as president of the British Mission, stood at just over £535 in Woodruff’s final published accounting before he left England.¹² Woodruff set aside the original directive to purchase an English bell and one of four clocks planned for the temple tower. Instead, he forwarded the funds to Church headquarters. He sent the bulk of the donations to the Temple Committee in Nauvoo by an unnamed courier and carried a very small balance (£8.13.5½) with him across the Atlantic to New York and then to Nauvoo. His actions fulfilled Young’s request “to transmit the money . . . by the first safe opportunity.”¹³

It was just as well. A bell was secured and put to use in Nauvoo before Woodruff sailed from Liverpool in February 1846. If Woodruff had purchased an English bell, it could not have arrived in Nauvoo prior to mid-April 1846. That is when Woodruff’s journal records his reunion with his wife Phebe and their children.¹⁴ Heber C. Kimball’s journal says that each session of the temple endowment was announced with the ringing of the temple bell while endowments were being

11. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 7:534–35, 542 (November 30 and December 10, 1845); Doctrine and Covenants 124:55; Young to Woodruff, December 19, 1845.

12. Reuben Hedlock served as British Mission president from November 1843 to January 1845. Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, The Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 412.

13. *Millennial Star* 6 (September 15, 1845): 107; *Millennial Star* 7 (January 1, 1846): 5; *Millennial Star* 7 (February 1, 1846): 44. Woodruff’s journal entry differs slightly from the published summary. The journal says donations for the temple received by Reuben Hedlock (£255.15.3) and Woodruff (£317.12.11½) totaled £563.8.2½, or, he added, at \$485 per pound, \$2,732.52. See Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journals*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1985), 3:6–7 (January 21, 1846).

14. Woodruff, *Journals*, 3:5, 22–25, 38–39, 48.

administered—between December 10, 1845, and February 7, 1846.¹⁵ The image is a poignant one. For years, the Saints had toiled to build their temple in the midst of poverty. Now, with joyous hearts, they could hear the beautiful sounds of a bell calling them to the house of the Lord to receive their washings, anointings, and endowments. Of all the tasks this bell would be called on to perform, this would be the finest and remain longest in the hearts of the people—a call to come out from the world and to prepare for eternity.

Kimball's journal account is consistent with the idea of a locally acquired bell. In contrast, many of the traditional stories have a bell from England arriving with Wilford Woodruff. One of those is a reminiscence of George Washington Bean, who worked on the Nauvoo Temple as a young man. Bean told his son Willard W. Bean that he had been present at the temple's dedication. (George would have been fifteen at the time.) Willard Bean is quoted in one source as saying, "Among other things he [George W. Bean] spoke of a large bell some of the brethren (missionaries) had sent from England by ship to New Orleans, thence by river steamer up the Mississippi River to Nauvoo, where it was hung, with some difficulty, in the steeple of the Temple."¹⁶ While this part of George Bean's recollection lacks veracity, his description of the bell's later use in the Salt Lake Fort can be verified.

George Bean was not the only one who knew half the story. Wilford Woodruff's request for donations was widely known, but fewer people knew of Brigham Young's decision to use an American bell. That decision was communicated by letter and not widely known to the public. The stories of an English bell hanging in the Nauvoo Temple have been passed down from one generation to another, often converging with other stories. They include unreliable personal "recollections" mingled with verifiable, documented facts. The traditional story became an assumed truth that found its way unchallenged into reputable publications.¹⁷

15. *Heber C. Kimball's Journal: November 21, 1845 to January 7, 1846*, introduction by Jerald and Sandra Tanner (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm, [1982]), December 10, 1845, to January 7, 1846.

16. Willard Bean, as quoted by Joseph J. Cannon, "President Joseph J. Cannon's Message," *Temple Square Topics: Official Organ of Temple Square Mission* 3 (July and August 1939).

17. For example, see Mary Grant Judd, "A Monument with a Message," *Relief Society Magazine* 29 (January 1942): 11; Ida Blum, *Nauvoo: Gateway to the West* (Carthage, Ill.: Ida Blum [Mrs. Carl J. Blum], 1974), 76–77 (crediting the story to Kimball S. Erdman, the great-great-grandson of David Burlock Lamoreaux);

Aside from the English bell stories, early Latter-day Saint sources offer no explanation of the bell's origin, acquisition, or size. Bells of that time varied widely in size. The projected 2,000-pound British bell would fit the "large" category. If a temporary bell of medium proportions was chosen, it might have weighed between 300 and 800 pounds and measured up to 33 inches in diameter. (The bronze-alloy bell hung in the rebuilt Nauvoo Temple weighs 846 pounds and has a diameter of 33½ inches. It was produced by the Verdin Clock and Bell Company, with headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio, and cast at the Petit Fritsen Bell Foundry in the Netherlands.)¹⁸ Another choice might have been as small as a steamboat's signal bell, the type reported by Thomas L. Kane in 1846. Usually much smaller, a steamboat bell's diameter could reach up to 33 inches.

Whatever its size, by the fall of 1845 a signal bell was in use both before and after it was placed atop the temple. The Nauvoo Temple bell served as one of three—perhaps four—distinct signaling devices used to alert the people of Nauvoo. Some of these alarms could be used at ground level; others required an elevated position, ultimately the roof or tower of the temple. As safety concerns increased in late summer, work on the temple tower moved forward. On Saturday, August 23, 1845, the cupola, or dome, was raised to the top of the temple tower with Stephen Goddard riding it up. According to Willard Richards, Goddard further demonstrated his agility when he "stood on his head on the top of the spire post."¹⁹ Following this feat, sixty or seventy workmen celebrated by eating watermelons in the attic. The men then hoisted a flag, which remained in place until Sunday night.²⁰

Heidi S. Swinton, *Sacred Stone: The Temple at Nauvoo* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002), 111; and Russ Hill, "Bell to Keep Resounding on KSL," *Deseret News*, June 21, 2005, A-8, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/600142891/Bell-to-keep-resounding-on-KSL.html>, which used information from a marker near the bell tower on Temple Square to explain the bell's origin: "It's generally believed the bell was a gift from English converts to the LDS Church when they arrived in Nauvoo."

18. R. Scott Lloyd, "Bronze Bell to Be Distinctive Feature on Nauvoo Temple," *Deseret News*, Church News, July 13, 2001, <https://www.thechurchnews.com/archive/2001-07-14/bronze-bell-to-be-distinctive-feature-on-nauvoo-temple-20075>.

19. As quoted by John Taylor, "John Taylor Journal," August 23, 1845, *BYU Studies* 23, no. 3 (1983): 85–86, 85 n. 265; "Samuel Holister Rogers Journal, 1819–1846," August 23, 1845, typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

20. Joseph Hovet, *Joseph Hovey Autobiography*, Perry Special Collections.

Once the dome was in place, a bell could be hung in the tower. The date of its hanging is not known. On November 20, 1845, a newspaper in Burlington, Iowa, across the river from Nauvoo, noted that “[the Saints] are finishing the Temple, putting in the carpets, &c., and *intend* to hang a bell.”²¹ If accurate, this report would allow a bell situated temporarily on the ground to be used in sounding military alarms in September and the same bell (or a larger one) to be hung in the tower before ordinance work began. The alarms sounded in mid-September are described by Nauvoo residents as coming from the Nauvoo Temple bell. The reports do not say if it was a land-based bell or one in the tower.

On September 10, vigilantes attacked Morley Settlement. This was the beginning of a campaign to torch Latter-day Saint farm buildings and grain stacks in rural Hancock County in an effort to drive the Latter-day Saints out of Illinois. In response, Nauvoo officials stepped up preparations to defend the city. On September 17, they gathered the men and posted small detachments at key entry routes outside Nauvoo and within the city. Colonel Jonathan Hale, for example, was ordered to station thirty men from his Third Regiment in the Squire Spencer barn east of the temple.²²

The first known mention of a signal bell associated with the temple was recorded at the September 17 gathering. Nauvoo’s police chief, Hosea Stout, who was managing militia assignments for Major General Charles C. Rich, ordered “that at the tolling of the Temple Bell every man know it as an alarm & repair forthwith armed & equipd to the parade ground.” The next day, Stout mentioned a second way to alert the citizen soldiers. All companies of the Nauvoo Legion were “to be in readiness for actual service at a moment’s warning & that they immediately repair to the ground they now occupied. At firing of the artillery it shall be the signal of alarm.” A test of his signal on the nineteenth brought the soldiers together for a meeting with Brigham Young.²³

At the meeting, Brigham Young identified other ways to notify the militia. Hosea Stout reported Young’s message: “As signals—we will

21. “Nauvoo,” *Burlington (Iowa) Hawk-Eye*, November 20, 1845, 2, emphasis added.

22. Hosea Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861*, ed. Juanita Brooks, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:66–67; Thomas Bullock, “Journal of Thomas Bullock (1816–1885): 31 August 1845 to 5 July 1846,” ed. Gregory R. Knight, *BYU Studies* 31, no. 1 (1991): 20.

23. Stout, *Diary of Hosea Stout*, 1:66–67; Don F. Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple: A Story of Faith* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002), 271–72.

have the flag hoisted and then let all men be on the ground as a flag with strip[e]s is hoisted[;] it is a signal for all commissioned officers to meet in council at Gen [George] Miller's house." Young added, "We intend shortly to have a light at night on the top of the temple which can be seen for miles." The light would be a way to alert more distant volunteers. A striped flag would call the officers to the parade ground, and a white flag would invite the men to muster. From her home in Nauvoo, Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs could see the white flag, "a signature to gather." She also heard the firing of the cannon that week and understood its meaning.²⁴

When rumors that a mob was gathering at Carthage reached Nauvoo on September 21, "the flag was raised and the Temple bell rang to collect a posse to go to Carthage." Between forty to fifty men responded to the bell's alarm. They left Nauvoo under Colonel Stephen Markham's command. As more troops were being marshaled, Lieutenant General Brigham Young arrived on the scene. The alarm was false, he said, and he dismissed the troops.²⁵

The attacks on outlying Latter-day Saint properties in the fall of 1845 led the Twelve to confirm a private decision made in March: they would sell Church properties, including the temple, and move the Latter-day Saints to a new gathering place in the West. Before the mass exodus, Brigham Young dedicated parts of the temple in phases to allow sacred ordinances to be performed. On the fifth of October, Young offered a dedicatory prayer and presented "the Temple, thus far completed, [to the Lord] as a monument of the Saints' liberality, fidelity, and faith."²⁶

Throughout the fall and winter of 1845, Church leaders pursued opportunities to sell or lease the temple. In October, they extended an invitation to Catholic Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati. A month later they advertised in the *Burlington Hawk-Eye* an offer to rent the temple to any responsible society. In December, Brigham Young received a tip that a

24. Stout, *Diary of Hosea Stout*, 1:67, entry for September 19, 1845; Zina Diantha Huntington, "'All Things Move in Order in the City': The Nauvoo Diary of Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs," ed. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *BYU Studies* 19, no. 3 (1979): 320.

25. Journal History of the Church, 1896–2001, Church History Library, CR 100 137, July, 1845, reel 7, vol. 19, September 21, 1845, <https://catalog.lds.org/assets/2987565f-96fb-470c-88co-08c3ec43e3fe/o/339>; Stout, *Diary of Hosea Stout*, 1:70–71.

26. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 514–15; Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:456–57. A three-day general conference began the following day, Monday, October 6, 1845.

firm in Philadelphia was interested in buying the temple, but nothing came of it.²⁷

Brigham Young wanted to see a finished temple before he left with a pioneer company. But threats against his freedom hastened the departure of Church leaders—those who were administering the ordinances. On January 2, 1846, Young reassured the Saints that leaving Nauvoo did not mean the end of temple ordinances. “We can’t stay in this house but a little while,” he said. “We [have] got to build another house. It will be a larger house than this, and a more glorious one, and we shall build a great many houses . . . and build houses all over the continent of N[orth] America.”²⁸

The next phase for the temple was its closing down. February 7, 1846, marked the last endowments and last proxy baptisms for the dead. The next day, a Sunday, Young met with the Council of the Twelve in his office in the southeast corner of the temple attic. It was in this room that couples knelt across an altar to be married. “We knelt around the altar,” Young noted in his journal, “and dedicated the building to the Most High. We asked his blessing upon our intended move to the west; also asked him to enable us some day to finish the Temple, and dedicate it to him . . . and to preserve the building as a monument to Joseph Smith. . . . We then left the Temple.”²⁹

When Brigham Young left the temple on the eighth, he told a congregation in the grove that the Twelve would depart later that week. Everyone else was to follow when the prairie lands of Iowa had dried and grasses were growing. Some anxious families left ahead of schedule—less than a fourth of the whole. Most of the exiles crossed the river systematically as planned, from March through the end of May.³⁰

In late March, Orson Hyde wrote to Brigham Young, who was camped at Sugar Creek, Iowa, that the temple would not be ready for its planned dedication on April 6, 1846, the Church’s sixteenth anniversary. Instead, dedicatory services began with a private dedication on April 30, with Wilford Woodruff as voice, followed by a public meeting on May 1,

27. Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:508, 537–38; *Burlington (Iowa) Hawk-Eye*, November 20, 1845, 2.

28. *Heber C. Kimball’s Journal*, January 2, 1846.

29. Richard O. Cowan, *Temple Building: Ancient and Modern* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1971), 29; Elden J. Watson, ed., *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847* (Salt Lake City: Elden Jay Watson, 1971), 28.

30. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 594–97.

when Joseph Young offered a dedicatory prayer.³¹ Woodruff arrived in Nauvoo from England two weeks before the dedication. On April 13, 1846, from a steamboat still some distance downriver, he caught his first glance of Nauvoo. Raising a spyglass to his eye to get a better view, he “examined the city” and found that “the Temple truly looked splendid.”³²

Later Uses of the Nauvoo Temple Bell

References to the ringing of the bell continued after the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple. On June 14, 1846, Nauvoo’s militia heard “the ringing of the Temple Bell.” Around seven hundred armed men gathered on the green behind the temple with their firearms. A large mob had assembled at nearby Golden Point, threatening to attack the temple. On this occasion, the mob dispersed. But these renewed threats prompted many families to hasten their efforts to leave and join those already on their way.³³

Over the next several weeks, the temple bell was regularly used to sound an alarm for men to assemble in defense of the city. George Morris, who remained behind in Nauvoo to help complete the temple, remembered those days: “I have lain in the Temple night after night upon the hard wooden benches with my rifle by my side expecting an attack every minute, I have laid in my bed with my clothes on and my gun leaning against my pillow where I could lay my hand upon it . . . and jumped from my bed at all hours of the night at the sound of the big drum and the ringing of the Temple bell which was a signal for us to gather.” As Morris noted, it was not just a bell hanging in the temple tower belfry that alerted the troops. A base drum was there also.³⁴

On September 10, at the beginning of what would be known as the Battle of Nauvoo, the bell rang to notify a mixture of Latter-day Saint forces and newly arrived non-Latter-day Saint city residents of the coming battle. The two competing militaries exchanged shots that day, and again on the eleventh. “We soon got into order,” Curtis E. Bolton wrote in his diary, “and just as the bell was rung to give notice that the Mob were in Motion we started to meet them.” On the sixteenth, following

31. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 110; *Hancock Eagle*, April 10, 17, 21, 1846.

32. Wilford Woodruff, Journal, January 1845–December 1846, Church History Library, MS 1352, box 2, folder 2, April 13, 1846.

33. Bullock, “Journal of Thomas Bullock,” 68–69 (June 14, 1846).

34. George Morris, *Autobiography, 1816–1891*, typescript, 1953, 26, Perry Special Collections.

the battle, the trustees surrendered the city to the mob by signing a "treaty." The agreement allowed the trustees and two others to remain in Nauvoo for the disposition of Church and private property. All other Latter-day Saints were required to move out as soon as possible.³⁵

The next day, invaders occupied Nauvoo and began to forcibly remove the remnant followers of Brigham Young from the city. The trustees were forced under duress to give the keys of the temple to Henry I. Young, chairman of the Quincy Committee, who promptly opened the building to the invaders. Desecration of the temple began immediately. On the eighteenth, some of the invaders climbed up the tower where they beat the drum, rang the bell, and shouted for joy. One preacher yelled, "Peace! Peace! Peace! to the inhabitants of the earth, now the Mormons are driven!"³⁶

Around this time Colonel Thomas L. Kane, a friend to the Latter-day Saints, visited Nauvoo. He found the temple in the possession of a drunken mob. He convinced the guards that he was just an interested passerby, and they permitted him to view the interior. Colonel Kane climbed to the observation section of the tower and viewed the city from there. In the steeple, he found "fragments of food, cruises of liquor, and broken drinking vessels," along with "a bass drum and a steam-boat signal bell." The bell, he said, was located in the high belfry. "A cruel spirit of insulting frolic carried some of them up into the high belfry of the Temple steeple, and there, with the wicked childishness of inebriates, they whooped, and shrieked, and beat the drum that I had seen, and rang in charivariic unison their loud-tongued steam-boat bell."³⁷

35. Curtis E. Bolton, *Reminiscences and Journals, 1846–1853*, manuscript, 2 vols., 1:7, MS 1424, Church History Library; "Articles of Accommodation," September 16, 1846, original draft, Chicago Historical Society, available in David E. Miller and Della S. Miller, *Nauvoo: City of Joseph* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1974), 202, 249–50.

36. Thomas Bullock, *The Pioneer Camp of the Saints: The 1846 and 1847 Mormon Trail Journals of Thomas Bullock*, ed. Will Bagley (Spokane, Wash.: Arthur H. Clark, 1997), 66–67 (September 17–18, 1846); Andrew Jenson, "The Battle of Nauvoo," *Historical Record* 8 (June 1889): 856.

37. Thomas L. Kane, *The Mormons: A Discourse Delivered before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania: March 26, 1850* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1850), 8, 11. George A. Smith read at length from Kane's published discourse in a "Historical Address" delivered in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, on October 8 and 9, 1868, *Journal of Discourses by President Brigham Young, His Two Counsellors, and the Twelve Apostles*, reported by D. W. Evans and John Grimshaw (Liverpool: Horace S. Eldredge, 1871; repr., Salt Lake City, 1967), 13:116–18.

Kane's description of the bell as a "steam-boat signal bell" added more complexity to the Nauvoo Bell's history. Typically, a steamboat bell would have been smaller than a good-sized church bell. Steamboat bells, like some bells used in churches, were of a nonrocker type and were rung with the use of a clapper. Rocking type bells were not standard on boats because they were prone to ring with the wave movement of the ship. Steamboat bells ranged from fourteen to thirty-three inches in circumference, depending on the size and design of the boat. Kane did not offer dimensions in his description of the bell. Yet his eyewitness account of a drum and a steamboat signal bell in the tower does suggest that this bell was the same one used by the Saints. Kane's observation is trustworthy evidence of the bell's style and type—and a hint as to its origin.

The Nauvoo Temple Bell Goes West

Westward-bound Daniel H. Wells and William Cutler arrived at Winter Quarters on September 23, 1846. They carried letters for Brigham Young reporting the events surrounding the Battle of Nauvoo. His directions concerning Church property included this directive: "As you will have no further use for the Temple bell, we wish you to forward it to us by the first possible chance, for we have [much] need [of] it at this place."³⁸

Acting on these instructions, the trustees saw to it that the bell was removed from the temple and transported to the Missouri River camp of the Saints. Joshua Hawkes stated in 1904 that "he and James Houton took the Nauvoo Temple bell over the Mississippi River in October 1846, and that it was in [the] charge of Joseph L. Heywood."³⁹ Heywood was one of the trustees. The bell arrived in Winter Quarters by December 1846 and was placed in the public square, where its chiming called people to worship services and community meetings. For example, on the twentieth, after Mary Richards had taken care of her morning chores, she sat down to write a letter: "In about ten minutes after[ward] the Temple bell rung for meeting. got ready and went[.] Bro Brigham

38. Brigham Young to the high council at Council Point, September 27, 1845, CR 1234 1, General Correspondence, Outgoing, 1843–1876, Brigham Young Office Files, 1832–1878; also in Preston Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness: The Story of the Mormon Migration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1947), 243, 245.

39. Joshua Hawkes, conversation with Andrew Jenson, Salt Lake City, April 2, 1904, recorded by Andrew Jenson, MS 17956, box 51, folder 3, Andrew Jenson Collection, circa 1841–1942, Church History Library, <https://catalog.lds.org/assets/od4b8fbo-cd53-4843-87ff-900da93262ae/o/4>.

preached a sermon that I think will be long remembered by all who heard it.” In his unforgettable remarks, Young called on the people to cease their swearing, stealing, evil speaking, and other vices, or they would suffer God’s punishment.⁴⁰

The bell was still in use in the public square in Winter Quarters the following spring as the vanguard pioneer company prepared for their departure. John D. Lee noted that on Sunday, March 21, “the Saints assembled in a special conference at the stand by request of Pres. B. Young, notified or by the signal of the ringing of the Temple bell.” Five days later, on a Friday, Norton Jacob wrote in his journal: “At ten o’clock the people were called together by the ringing of the old temple bell and a special conference was held preparatory to the departure of the pioneers. Brother Brigham chastened the people severely for being so covetous and withholding their means in fitting out the pioneers.”⁴¹

Before Brigham Young left Winter Quarters in April 1847, he signed an “Epistle from the Twelve” containing detailed instructions for those who would follow. The letter directed Charles C. Rich to bring the bell to Utah in his emigrant company: “The first company will carry the Temple bell with fixtures for hanging at a moment’s notice, which will be rung at day light or a proper time, and call all who are able to arise to prayers, after which ringing of bell & breakfast, or ringing of bell and departure in fifteen minutes to secure the cool of the day till breakfast time &c as the bell may be needed—particularly in the night season if Indians are hovering around to let them know you are at your duty.”⁴²

Contrary to the plan, Rich’s emigrant company was not the first to leave after President Young’s departure. Instead, four companies left Winter Quarters between June 17 and 19, and Rich’s left June 21, after waiting two weeks for a cannon. “[W]e are organised to move five abreast the two cannons sciff and temple bell heading the middle line,”

40. Mary Haskin Parker Richards, *Winter Quarters: The 1846–1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards*, ed. Maurine Carr Ward, Life Writings of Frontier Women, vol. 1 (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), 102.

41. John D. Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee, 1846–47 and 1859*, ed. Charles Kelley (Salt Lake City: Western Printing, 1938), 127; facsimile reprint, with introduction by Charles S. Peterson (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984); Norton Jacob, “The Life of Norton Jacob,” typescript, Perry Special Collections.

42. Brigham Young and the Council of the Twelve Apostles to “the Brethren at Winter Quarters . . .,” April 16, 1847, in Hosea Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861*, ed. Juanita Brooks, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:249–50 (April 18, 1847).

Patty Sessions wrote in her diary.⁴³ Rich attached the bell to a wagon where it could be easily rung to wake the company each day, signal them to begin their day's journey, and warn of potential Indian attacks. In her autobiography, Sara Rich, Charles C.'s wife, described the arrangement. "There was also a skiff or a boat fitted up on wheels, and the cannon placed on that. . . . So the boat and one cannon and the big bell was in our company. . . . The bell was so arranged over the boat and cannon, that it could be rung by pulling a rope." (Notice that the "big bell" was sounded with the pull of a rope attached to the clapper—the way steamboat bells were rung.) Because of the combined weight of the bell, cannon, and boat, two yoke of oxen were required to pull this custom wagon over the trail to Utah.⁴⁴

By June 21, 1847, Rich's company was on its way to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Along the route west, Rich journalized, "We rang the bell at daylight for getting up and putting out our herds; rang again at 8 o'clock for starting." The Nauvoo Temple bell arrived safely in the Salt Lake Valley in mid-September.⁴⁵ On October 2, it was placed in the original ten-acre log and adobe fort, next to the flagpole and not far from the brush bowery built by returning members of the Mormon Battalion. Three weeks later, Tarlton Lewis was paid one dollar to install a bell post and hang the bell.⁴⁶ A time or two that first winter the bell post was used as a whipping post to punish thieves who chose a bare-backed whipping over a ten dollar fine. Later on, the Nauvoo Bell was moved to a new location near the old bowery on Temple Square, where it "pealed forth its silvery notes" to call the Saints to religious services. As a signal

43. Patty Bartlett Sessions, "Diaries and Account Book," manuscript, vol. 1, June 21–23, 1847, Church History Library. Only one cannon came west with the company. See Leonard J. Arrington, *Charles C. Rich: Mormon General and Western Frontiersman* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1974), 114.

44. Sara De Armon Pea Rich, as cited in Carol Cornwall Madsen, *Journey to Zion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 376–77; "Journal of Sarah De Armon Pea Rich," typescript, 71, Perry Special Collections.

45. Charles C. Rich, Diary, June 23, 1847, Church History Library; Sarah P. Rich, *Reminiscences*, Church History Library; Charles C. Rich to Brigham Young, August 18, 1847, General Correspondence, Incoming, 1840–1877, Brigham Young Office Files, 1832–1878, Church History Library.

46. Harrison Sperry, drawing representing the Old Fort and its two additions in the Great Salt Lake Valley as it was in 1847, MS 9164, Church History Library; Salt Lake Stake, high council, minutes, October 24 and November 7, 1847, Church History Library.

bell, it also launched other community functions, including organized wolf hunts.⁴⁷

Unlike the first year's gathering, the Pioneer Day observance of July 24, 1849, made use of the artillery brought by Charles C. Rich's company—and the Nauvoo Bell. The event began early with the firing of one cannon. A brass band traveled throughout the city in two carriages, playing martial airs. After a large national flag was unfurled atop a hundred-foot-tall liberty pole, it was saluted with the firing of six guns. Next came the ringing of the Nauvoo Bell, followed by spirit-stirring airs from the band. As a procession moved from Brigham Young's home to the bowery for a formal celebration, "the young men and young ladies sang a hymn through the street; the cannons kept up one continual roar, the musketry rolled, the Nauvoo Bell pealed out its silvery notes, and the brass band played a slow march."⁴⁸

Truly, the Saints and their leaders felt the need to celebrate in grand style their arrival in a new gathering place. The Nauvoo Bell occupied a place of prominence in this celebration. But in subsequent celebrations of July 24, the bell was absent. It had met an unfortunate death. During the severe winter of 1849–50, the bell cracked during a hard frost, making it unusable. A proposal to repair it by welding was abandoned when no one could be found locally with the needed skill. Later, the *Deseret News* reported that "it is about being re-cast, and enlarged, and we hope to hear its cheering tones again in a few days. It is a heavy undertaking for our present means, but it is confidently believed, that the iron furnace left by the gold diggers last season, when attached to the flue of the mint, can accomplish the object."⁴⁹

It is unlikely that the materials, equipment, and skills to cast and enlarge the bell existed in Utah in 1850. We talked with a specialist at the Verdin Bell Company (the firm that provided a bell for the rebuilt Nauvoo Temple). First of all, our contact said the mixing of bronze (a copper-based alloy) with other metals, often tin, must be carefully balanced in their proportions. Second, because a substantial amount of superfluous metal burns off during the smelting and casting processes, bell

47. Journal History, May 14, 1848; John Nebeker, "Early Justice in Utah," dictated in 1884, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 3 (July 1930): 88; "Silvery Notes," Thomas Bullock, "24th of July, at Great Salt Lake City," *Frontier Guardian*, September 9, 1849, 4; "Wolf Hunts," James Smithies, Diary, 1846–1859, February 22, 1848, Church History Library.

48. Bullock, "24th of July," *Frontier Guardian*, September 19, 1849, 4.

49. "Nauvoo Bell," *Deseret News*, September 14, 1850, 112.

foundries do not reuse the material from older bells. Finally, it would be next to impossible to determine the mixture of metals in the Nauvoo Bell in order to match it. Any attempt to blend metals, the Verdin expert said, would create a brittle bell without true tones. Indeed, the Utah craftsmen acknowledged that they faced a “heavy undertaking for their present means.” David Shayt, an expert at the Smithsonian, offered a similar assessment. He doubted that craftsmen inexperienced with bell making could produce a fine-tuned bell with the forty-niners’ furnace. In addition, he said that to create a new bell they would need another bell to serve as a pattern.⁵⁰ The *Deseret News* said nothing more about the experiment to create a new bell in the iron furnace.

If the cracked original Nauvoo Bell was destroyed in a failed attempt to recast an enlarged version, as we believe, what is that large bell hanging in the handsome thirty-five-foot campanile on Temple Square? The short answer: The bell on Temple Square known publicly for decades as the Nauvoo Bell is a nineteenth-century church bell named for the minister whose Midwestern church it once briefly adorned.

The Hummer Bell

The story of Michael Hummer’s bell begins in 1840, when he arrived in Iowa City. He had chosen the ministry and prepared himself with training in college and Presbyterian seminary.

During the 1838 school year, Hummer taught in an academy in Stephenson, now Rock Island City, Illinois. The following spring, he was engaged by the Presbyterian Church in Davenport, Iowa, for six months of preaching. A member of the Davenport congregation remembered Hummer’s distinct personality: “He was a very talented man, and was considered, for years, the ablest clergyman in the State; but he was very peculiar. He possessed a high temper, and did not hesitate to show it if occasion required.”⁵¹ A contemporary characterized him as “a man

50. Telephone conversation with Verdin specialist by Shannon Michael Tracy; telephone conversation with Smithsonian specialist by Rebecca K. Hyatt, June 16, 2000; “Nauvoo Bell,” *Deseret News*, September 14, 1850. Also see Verdin Bells and Clocks, <http://www.verdin.com/about/>.

51. J. M. D. Burrows, *Fifty Years in Iowa: Being Personal Reminiscences of J. M. D. Burrows concerning Men and Events, Social Life, Industrial Interests, Physical Development, and Commercial Progress of Davenport and Scott County during the Period from 1838 to 1888* (Davenport, Iowa: Glass and Company, 1888), 19–20.

of vigorous intellect & an orator, but of *ungovernable temper*.” It was said that “he entered upon his work with confidence and energy.” The Schuyler presbyter of Illinois sent Hummer to Iowa City to consecrate a small congregation—that is, to increase their level of their devotion to sacred things.⁵²

Hummer arrived in Iowa City with the Rev. Launcelot Graham Bell, the founder of numerous Presbyterian churches in developing areas west of the Mississippi. “Iowa City was a little more than a year old; streets had been opened and lots cleared of timber, the inhabitants had erected frame, log, and clapboard houses and had finished one story of the capitol” when the two churchmen arrived. Working together, in September 1840 they organized the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City. Thirteen members made up the original congregation. For the next two years, four ministers in succession served the congregation for a short time each.⁵³

In December 1842, Michael Hummer was given greater authority and an opportunity for significant leadership in an expanded organization. The Reverends S. J. Bill and M. Hummer were elected as presiding ministers. Hummer was given the additional role of present pastor. The newly staffed board of trustees consisted of a lead miner, two farmers, three merchants, and a carpenter. These men drafted a new constitution to guide the church.⁵⁴

With a constitution in place, the trustees could receive real estate, build a building, and conduct other secular business. In the spring of 1843, the board gave Hummer the responsibility to raise funds for a church building. The following November, a subscription paper circulated.

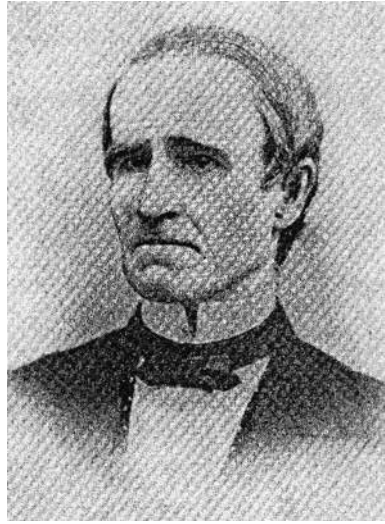
52. Ruth A. Gallaher, “Hummer’s Bell,” *The Palimpsest* 3, no. 5 (1922): 155, emphasis in original.

53. Jacob Van Der Zee, “History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City,” *Journal of Presbyterian Historical Society* 9 (June 1918): 290. This article was delivered as a seventy-fifth anniversary lecture. It was also published as a fifty-four-page booklet by the State Historical Society of Iowa and in the *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 9 (1918), a periodical “prepared under the auspices of the Iowa Society to ‘serve as a kind of model for other churches to imitate.’”

54. First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City, “1890 First Presbyterian Church Iowa City Jubilee Anniversary Program,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2074>; “1842 Photocopy of Founding Letter,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2040>; Notes by Bob Hibbs, Iowa City Historian, June 13, 2006, in Certification of Organization of the First Presbyterian Church, Iowa City Genealogical Society, <http://iagenweb.org/johnson/CertFirstPresbChurchOrganization.htm>.

Trustee Chauncey Swan headed the list by donating three hundred dollars and a building lot valued at one hundred dollars. The lot at Clinton and Market streets was elevated and a block north of what succeeding generations would call the Old Capitol. Solicitation extended out to other congregations as well. To generate support, the trustees promised “in point of size, taste and durability” the church “should be inferior to no church then being finished in Iowa City.”⁵⁵

Donations varied in size, from Swan’s generous offer to what for many was a generous five dollars. Forty-seven people promised contributions totaling nine hundred dollars. The early years in Iowa City were, as one historian put it, “the years when the men and women of Iowa had ‘to bend their energies to meet the necessity of a roof over their heads and a supply of bacon and meal for their table.’” The board sent Hummer east to raise money from older and richer Presbyterian congregations. The Iowa City trustees agreed to reimburse Hummer for his expenses. His salary would be 10 percent of the money he raised. Hummer headed out in the spring of 1844, the first of two or three trips east during the following two and a half years. Hummer’s ledger for 1845–47 itemizes expenses for materials and services: He purchased a bell from the Meneeley Bell Foundry in Troy, New York, and in 1847 collected from donors in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York just over six hundred dollars.⁵⁶



Michael Hummer (1800–1879) served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City from 1841 to 1848. In 1922, author Ruth Gallaher said of Hummer in this faded picture, “The face is thin with high cheek bones and an aquiline nose . . . and the tight-lipped mouth is drawn down at the corners as if he is determined not to smile at any one.”

55. Van Der Zee, “History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City,” 536–37.

56. Van Der Zee, “History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City,” 537–39; Gallaher, “Hummer’s Bell,” 155–56; Notes by Bob Hibbs, June 13, 2006; Michael Hummer, “1847 Rev. Michael Hummer’s Church Book, 1845–1847,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show2047>. Only one historical narrative,

Before Hummer left Iowa, the trustees hired a contractor to build the church. While in New York, Hummer received two letters from Theodore Sanxay raising concerns about the contractor. The trustees had approved a \$5,500 contract for the building, an ambitious undertaking. Sanxay said the contractor put up the walls and got the window frames and rafters in place but seemed unwilling to do much more. Church donors were upset. The contractor wanted extra pay for minor items needed for the building but not specified in the contract. "His only cry is 'mony, mony, mony.'" Hummer suggested that people donate "a few Locks, pew fastners [*sic*] and Butts." In July 1845, the trustees accepted Hummer's suggestion and named him an agent "to settle with the contractor and to superintend future operations." Hummer turned his energy to the project. He provided architectural drawings and wrote out specifics on dimensions, lumber, carpenter work, painting, and brick work for the spire.⁵⁷

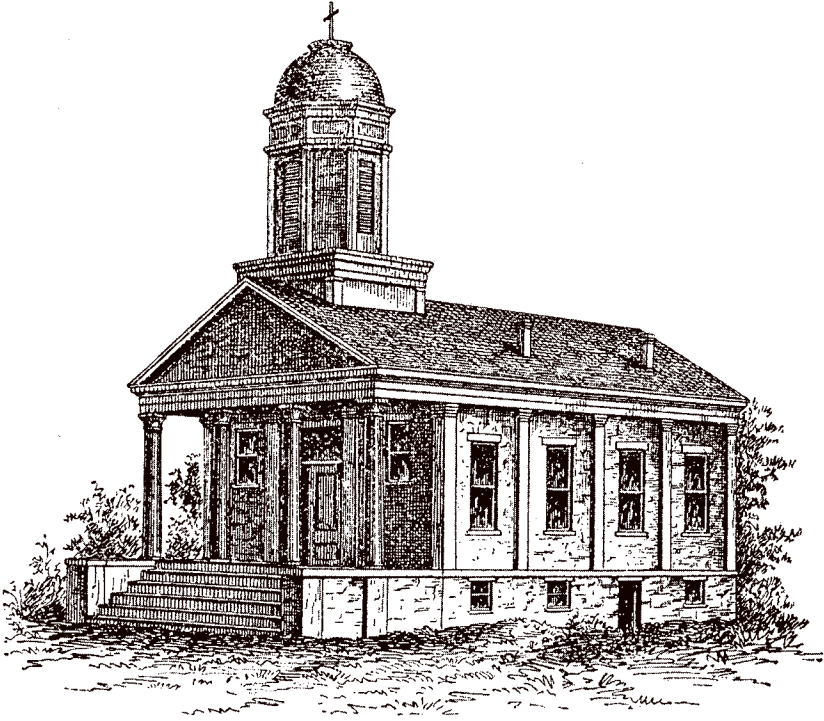
In late December 1846, Hummer delivered his first sermon in a basement meeting room in the unfinished church. The completed church building was dedicated on February 24, 1850, two years after S. H. Hazzard replaced Hummer as minister. As the trustees promised, the church was not of inferior quality. The classic brick building measured forty-two feet across and extended seventy-five feet from front to back. It featured a high portico and Grecian columns and cupola. The Society had expended around five thousand dollars. A smaller than desired bell sounded the call to services. For many parishioners, a church bell was seen as a mark of success.⁵⁸

Doctrinal issues and financial conflict ended Hummer's service in 1848. During his trips east, he embraced some of the beliefs and activities

that of Van Der Zee, says the bell was a gift: "The bell was a large one, of heavy and splendid tone, presented to the church by some gentlemen of Troy, New York, the proprietor of the bell foundry being one of the number."

57. Van Der Zee, "History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City," 537–38; Theodore Sanxay, "1844 Letter and Envelope from Theodore Sanxay to Rev. Michael Hummer," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2043>; "Date Unknown: Specifications for the Presbyterian Church Spire," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2182>; S. B. Gardner, "1851 Cross Bill Filed by the Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church against Rev. Hummer," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2049>.

58. Charles [Clarence] Aurner, *History of Johnson County, Iowa, containing a History of the County and Its Townships, Cities and Villages from 1836 to 1882* (Iowa City, Iowa: n.p., 1883), 433.



Construction of The First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City began in 1844, but funding shortages delayed completion until 1850. This handsome brick building suffered irreparable damage by a tornado in 1856. Drawing by an unknown artist for the cover of the church's centennial program in 1940. Courtesy Iowa City Public Library.

attributed to Emanuel Swedenborg, among them a form of “spirit-rapping,” or Spiritualism.⁵⁹ Such ideas, considered unorthodox by Presbyterians, were not well received by most of Hummer’s congregation. In addition, Hummer was said to be “always excitable, somewhat peculiar, and an avowed infidel before his conversion.” As a youth, Hummer was an atheist who converted to Presbyterianism.⁶⁰

59. Emanuel Swedenborg was born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1688 and died in 1772. Members of the group acknowledge their religion draws its primary theology from his writings. Swedenborg’s theology denies the Vicarious Atonement, the Trinity, and the deity of the Holy Spirit, but holds Christ as divine. See tenets of Swedenborgianism,” <http://www.swedenborg.org/beliefs/tenets-of-swedenborgianism>.

60. Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 433.

The congregation's challenges against Hummer's unacceptable preaching were not the only controversies. Soon they charged him with misconduct in his handling of the funds. The matter was complicated because he paid his own salary and expenses out of the donated funds, and he did not reveal the details. During a subsequent trial to investigate these matters, Hummer became furious and left the room in a rage. The presbytery, he declared, is "a den of ecclesiastical thieves."⁶¹ Despite the rift, Hummer tried to remain in his position. But because he ignored the authority of the presbytery and its finding, he was not successful. At the first session of the elders in 1848, Michael Hummer was formally expelled from the ministry by the church trustees and set adrift.⁶²

Before Hummer left Iowa City, he reached an agreement with the church trustees. As partial payment of the salary still owed to him, the two parties mutually agreed that he could take possession of the communion service, two Bibles, the pulpit furniture, twelve lamps, and other movable property of the church. In addition, he would also receive a promissory note for \$658.22, which was secured by a mortgage on the church real estate. He was to receive annual installments of \$100 each. After settling with the church, Hummer moved south to Keokuk. His plan was to create a spiritualistic temple or church to promote his ideas of Swedenborgianism. A specialist in Presbyterian history observed, "Whatever his faults might be, Hummer was by no means a commonplace man: he came to be recognized as 'an able, original, striking, and to some extent effective preacher,' and strangers stopping in Iowa City, it is said, were apt to go hear him. Excitable and visionary at all times, he at length showed such violence that his parishioners believed him insane." Hummer was born in 1800 in Kentucky. At age twenty, he signed a covenant renouncing Christianity. He decided to "give himself to money-making." Later, a religious leader reached out to this "infidel," and Hummer was converted. It was then that he received his college and seminary training and became a minister. Hummer continued his involvement in the ministry after he left Iowa City. His last years were focused on an unnamed kind of business—presumably making money.⁶³

Hummer knew that the Iowa City church operated with limited funds. The board of trustees had agreed to his removal of physical

61. Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 433.

62. Gallaher, "Hummer's Bell," 156.

63. Van Der Zee, "History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City," 539, 539 n. 24. The 1870 U.S. Census for Wyandotte, Kansas, lists his occupation as "Business."

property (the board would later challenge that assumption). Did the bell also belong to him? Late in the summer of 1848, Hummer returned to Iowa City, accompanied by James W. Margrave, a former trustee who supported Hummer's plans to create a new movement in Keokuk. Their plan was for Hummer to climb into the belfry, unfasten the bell, and, with ropes and tackle, slowly lower the bell to the ground. Margrave would be waiting with a wagon readied for a hasty retreat with the prize. Their intent: transport the bell to Keokuk and place it in the belfry of Hummer's new church.⁶⁴

As the men were getting their equipment in place, curious onlookers in the small city gathered to see what was happening. The two conspirators apparently did not anticipate such interest, and they were not prepared for any resistance. Hummer climbed the tall construction ladder and successfully lowered the bell to the ground. But while he was still in the belfry unfastening the block and tackle, Margrave left the bell unattended. He took off to fetch his team and wagon from a nearby stable. During Margrave's absence, six or eight of the spectators implemented their own plan. First, they removed the ladder, trapping the now irritated Hummer in the empty belfry. Next, they loaded the bell into Eli Myer's wagon and drove away.⁶⁵

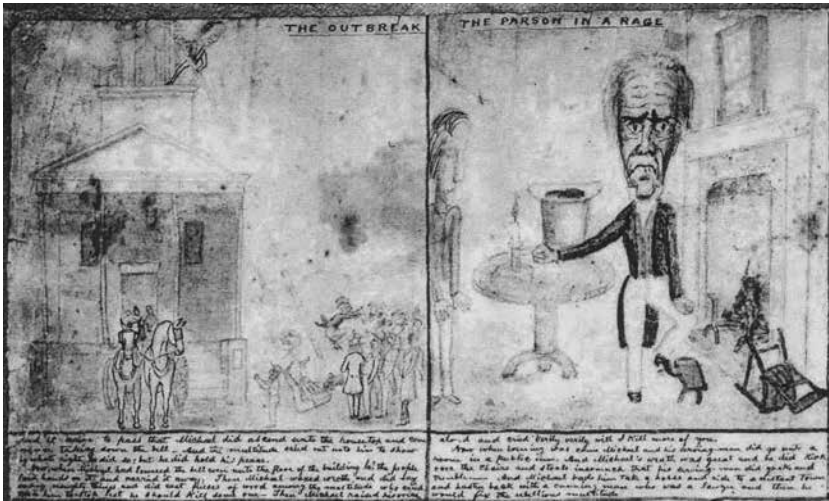
According to reminiscent accounts in Iowa City, the stranded Hummer began "raving and scolding and gesticulating like a madman," while the boys and other bystanders laughed at his helpless wrath. Hummer launched into an impromptu sermon, described by witnesses as "more remarkable for its emphatic language than for logic of thought," and then proceeded to drive home his points by hurling toward the crowd below pieces of scantling, bricks, and other loose boards from the unfinished bell tower. When Margrave returned, he freed his leader, but the bell was long gone. The pair headed back to Keokuk, without the desired goal in tow.⁶⁶

The Iowa City men who had taken the bell from Hummer transported it up the Iowa River to a point near the mouth of Rapid Creek. There, they sank it in deep water for a temporary hiding place. To aid in

64. Gallaher, "Hummer's Bell," 156–79; Van Der Zee, "History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City," 539, 541.

65. F. M. Irish, "Hummer and His Bell," *Des Moines Register*, May 22, 1927, typescript, Church History Library; Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 434.

66. Gallaher, "Hummer's Bell," 3:157–58; Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 433–34; Irish, "Hummer and His Bell," 2.



The seven panels of artist George Yewell's satirical drawing "Chronicles of the Bell" begin with "The Outbreak," showing Michael Hummer in the church tower throwing objects at those loading the bell into a wagon, and "The Parson in a Rage," depicting the pastor in a local inn that evening, threatening to hire an attorney "to fix the rebellious multitude." Charcoal sketch, version #4, 1848, panels 1 and 2, Iowa City Public Library.

a later retrieval, they attached one end of a large chain to the bell and the other end to the trunk of an elm tree near the bank. It is said that these secondary thieves intended to keep the bell secured while waiting for a settlement of the difficulties between the ex-minister and the trustees. However, when a few of the men returned to retrieve the bell, all they found was a chain still attached to the tree. The bell at the other end was gone! Some surmised that the bell had “washed down the river” or even “sunk through to China.” Meantime, Hummer employed his own approach. Drawing on his newfound beliefs, Hummer engaged in “spirit rappings.” He was told through the spirits, Hummer said, that the bell was buried in a well located eight miles to the west. Hummer and Margrave failed to locate the missing bell.⁶⁷

The removal of the “Hummer Bell” was a topic of great interest at the time. A local historian said it “was talked about, laughed over, and

67. Gallaher, "Hummer's Bell," 3:158; Irish, "Hummer and His Bell," 2; Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 433-34. Aurner said, "The 'spirit rappings' told Hummer that it was buried under the State house."



In the third panel of cartoonist George Yewell's satirical "Chronicles of the Bell," he imagines Michael Hummer running from a ghostly church bell in the night that calls him to repent of his "wickedness." Charcoal sketch, version #4, 1848, panel 3, Iowa City Public Library.

turned into a great deal of fun." Two young lawyers, John P. Cook and William H. Tuthill, wrote a song, improvising and expanding it as they sang. The first stanza of their creation, "Hummer's Bell" reads as follows:

"Ah, Hummer's bell! Ah, Hummer's bell!
 How many a tale of woe 'twould tell,
 Of Hummer driving up to town
 To take the brazen jewel down,
 And when high up in his belfre-e,
 They moved the ladder, yes, sir-e-e;"
 Thus while he towered aloft, they say,
 The bell took wings and flew away.⁶⁸

68. The complete poem can be found in "Hummer's Bell," *Annals of Iowa* 3 (July 1864): 333; Burrows, *Fifty Years in Iowa*, 21–22; and Gallaher, "Hummer's Bell," 163–64. Tuthill's initials, "W. H. T.," appear after the fourth eight-line stanza. Samuel Magill created an entirely new and longer (eleven-stanza) version: Samuel Magill, "Hummer's Bell," *Lone Tree Reporter* (Johnson, Iowa),

A panel cartoon reflecting the same point of view sketched on brown paper not long after the bell's confiscation was displayed in a local shop window and later published.⁶⁹

While the Iowa writers and artists kept the general story alive, a detailed explanation of the bell's travel to Utah and its uses there remained unwritten for years. Latter-day Saint emigrant company rosters, family recollections, newspaper reports, diaries, and correspondence between Brigham Young and various claimants reveal the rest of the story. Most importantly, these sources explain how Hummer's large brass church bell became confused with a smaller Nauvoo Temple bell.

The Lamoreaux Brothers and the Hummer Bell

The key Latter-day Saint player in this entanglement was David Burlock Lamoreaux. Though not a participant, David's older brother Andrew Losey Lamoreaux was implicated in some accounts. So, who are these brothers? Andrew Lamoreaux was born at Pickering, York, Ontario, Canada, in 1812.⁷⁰ His brother David was born at the same place in 1819. Their father, John McCord Lamoreaux, supported his family in Pickering as a successful grocery man for over twenty years. John had inherited the business from his father, Joshua, who fled to Canada from his native state, New York, where he had been branded a Tory because of his loyalty to King George of England and his refusal to fight with the American patriots during the Revolutionary War.⁷¹

While in his early teens, David Lamoreaux was cutting down trees when a sapling hit him in the face and broke his nose completely off. David ran for help with the nose in his hands. Stitched back onto his face, the nose survived. The accident left a hole in his forehead, so for

section 7, Johnson County Historical Edition, October 14, 1926, 1, accessed at NewspaperArchive. Elizabeth Irish's article about her father appears on the same page.

The cartoons, sketched in seven sections by George Yewell soon after the theft of the bell, were displayed in a local shop window. They were published in Millicent Smith, "Veil of Mystery Shrouds Hummer's Bell," *Des Moines Register*, May 22, 1927. The original cartoon is preserved in the State Historical Society of Iowa and can be viewed at "Chronicles of the Bell," <http://history.icpl.org/files/original/22451730c0ccafofc49baco5fobb120.jpg>.

70. Lyndon W. Cook and Milton V. Backman Jr., eds., *Kirtland Elders' Record* (Provo, Utah: Grandin, 1985), 91.

71. Edith Ivins Lamoreaux, *The Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux* (Salt Lake City: By the author, 1946), 6, available at Family History Library, Salt Lake City.

the rest of his life, David wore a patch to hide it.

When John Taylor and Parley P. Pratt brought the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to John Lamoreaux, he opened up the attic of his big store as an assembly room. The elders preached there to a room filled with the interested and the curious. The Lamoreaux family accepted the gospel message. To them it was as if coming directly from heaven. All were soon baptized.⁷²

The new Latter-day Saints sold their holdings and left Canada in 1838. John and his family, including Andrew and David, moved first to Kirtland, where they lived briefly, and next to Dayton, Ohio. In 1839, all of the family except Andrew moved to Springfield, Sangamon County, Illinois, into one of the few Latter-day Saint stakes created outside Nauvoo. Meanwhile, Andrew and his family moved to Missouri, from which they were soon expelled. They relocated to Nauvoo, and eventually the entire family joined them. The Lamoreaux family observed the rising stone walls of the temple and received their temple blessings. Andrew served as captain of a company assigned to the fortifications in the Battle of Nauvoo in September 1846.⁷³

The Lamoreaux family left Nauvoo in the great exodus of 1846 that, over a period of seven months, sent thousands of Latter-day Saints across the Mississippi River into Iowa. The Lamoreauxs spent a year



David B. Lamoreaux was the only Latter-day Saint in the group that hauled the Hummer bell to Salt Lake City in 1850. He wore a patch over his forehead to cover a youthful injury caused when a tree fell on his face. Downloaded from a public posting on Ancestry.com by Lamoreaux descendants.

72. Lamoreaux, *Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux*, 6.

73. Lamoreaux, *Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux*, 6; B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 3:13–14, 15 n. 25.

or so in the Kanesville area (now Council Bluffs, Iowa), where they prepared for the trek to Utah. During that time father John Lamoreaux died. On June 21, 1847, the Nauvoo Temple bell left Winter Quarters attached to a wagon for use as a signal bell in the Charles C. Rich emigrant company of 126 Latter-day Saints. This party was the last of ten that crossed the plains that year. On July 3 of the following year, Andrew, his wife, Isabelle, and their four children left Winter Quarters in the Willard Richards Company. They reached their destination in mid-October 1848. Meanwhile, David and Mary Ann Lamoreaux and their children relocated ninety-five miles north along the Mississippi River from Nauvoo in Iowa City.⁷⁴

It was during his sojourn in Iowa City that David Lamoreaux became involved in the “rescue” of Hummer’s bell. He was with those who hauled off the bell and sank it in Rapid Creek. The other named participants included Eli Myers (who drove the team), James Miller, and A. B. Newcomb. Over time, these four men concluded that the wrangling between Hummer and the church elders over ownership would not be resolved. This foursome, and possibly others, joined the rush to California for gold and took the bell with them. David Lamoreaux chose to travel only as far as Utah.⁷⁵

All of Lamoreaux’s adventurous associates made it to California. Eli Myers, a twenty-four-year-old farmer in rural Agency, Wapello County, and a native of Ohio, left behind his wife, Elizabeth, and their three children, the youngest just nine months old. James Miller, thirty-two, had migrated from his native Scotland to Canada, where he married, and then, in 1846, relocated to Iowa. His California venture left his wife, Elizabeth, and sons ages six and three in Iowa. Connecticut-born A. B. Newcomb, forty-five, left his wife, H. A., and their daughter behind. However, at different times over the next few years, all three returned to Iowa and moved their families to the gold fields in Amador County, east of Sacramento toward Sutter’s Creek.⁷⁶

74. Lamoreaux, *Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux*, 6; Pioneer emigration list, 1847–1848, 133, in docket book February 1844–May 1845, <https://history.lds.org/overlandtravel/pioneers/7070/david-burlock-lamoreaux>.

75. Irish, “Hummer and His Bell.”

76. Personal information is from census records and family trees at Ancestry.com for Myers and Miller and at FamilySearch.org for Newcomb. Eli Myers (1826–1905) had an uncle of the same name, Eli Myers (1813–1850), living in Amador County, California, who died on October 23, 1850, so the two did not meet in California. It is unknown if the senior Eli Myers influenced his nephew

On April 15, 1850, Myers, Miller, Newcomb, and Lamoreaux secretly fished out the bell and packed it in a strong box. They loaded the box onto Newcomb's wagon and headed west. Because Lamoreaux was a Latter-day Saint, they decided to go to Kanesville, Iowa, where they joined Shadrach Roundy's independent, Salt Lake City-bound freight company. While the bell moved west with Roundy, David Lamoreaux and his family seem to have joined a Church-sponsored emigrant company headed by William Snow. That party's en route inventory of people and resources lists the Lamoreaux family with two wagons, nine head of cattle, and six people. Emigrants in the Snow party ferried their forty-two wagons across the Missouri River and headed west on June 15, the smallest of ten companies that left Kanesville, Iowa, that year. The first segment of the company entered the Salt Lake Valley on October 1. Others arrived later.⁷⁷

Shadrach Roundy's even smaller freight company, which included a few independent travelers, left for Utah on June 22. His people regularly interacted with Snow's Church-sponsored emigrant train. Eventually, Roundy's company moved out ahead of the emigrants and arrived in Salt Lake City two weeks before them. During the trip, Newcomb's wagon experienced difficulties. One ox died near Laramie, Wyoming, and within a few more days, the other ox died, leaving Newcomb without transportation. So, the bell was transferred to Hiram Mott's wagon for the rest of the journey. Mott lost one ox, a cow, and seven horses (one on a hot July 15 from exhaustion while "running Buffaloes"). David Lamoreaux lost a large red and white ox and a red steer. Some of the company's cattle died of exhaustion; others either strayed or were left behind to die on the road west of Fort Bridger.⁷⁸

Hiram Mott, from Bainbridge, New York, served as the captain of one of three "tens" (Brigham Young's term for subgroups) in Roundy's company. Roundy was captain over the first ten, which, among others, included his own family and that of David Lamoreaux. William W. Rust, a Vermont native, was captain of the second ten. As with the Lamoreaux

to seek gold dust there. Both were born in Preble County, Ohio; Eli (1813) relocated to Johnson County, Iowa, in 1836. Eli (1826) moved with his parents and siblings to District 13 (later Agency), Wapello County, Iowa, sometime between 1842 and October 1845. Family group sheets of both men, Ancestry.com.

77. Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 433–34; Shadrach Roundy, Journal, 1850, June to September, MS 1403, Church History Library; Gardner, Snow, Record Book, 1850, MS 2614, Church History Library.

78. Roundy, Journal.

family, the names of Mott and Rust, with their wives and children, appear in both Roundy's journal and Snow's roster. The names of the three Iowa City men don't appear on either list. Perhaps these "Old School" Presbyterians maintained their independence by camping separately or moving ahead on their own.⁷⁹

Roundy's party arrived in Salt Lake City on September 10, 1850.⁸⁰ Eli Myers, James Miller, A. B. Newcomb, and David Lamoreaux wintered in the city, with the tightly boxed Hummer bell still in their possession. In early February, Hiram Mott met with Asa Calkin, who, with his family, had arrived in Salt Lake with William Snow's 1850 emigrant company. Calkin was working as a clerk in the tithing office. After negotiations, which may have included David Lamoreaux, the parties agreed on a purchase price of six hundred dollars. Calkin entered into this agreement while President Brigham Young was away on a trip to southern Utah. Later on, Young's absence would help explain some of the confusion surrounding the Hummer bell.⁸¹

Years later, Brigham Young assumed that because Hiram Mott negotiated the deal, Mott received the funds. The official record shows distributions to four people from an account set up at the tithing office for David Lamoreaux. On March 20, 1851, a credit of \$600 for "1 Bell" was posted in Lamoreaux's account. From then until mid-August, Lamoreaux authorized payments, in kind or cash, to three other men. The account book gives no reason for the payments. Most likely, they compensated the recipients for expenses incurred in transporting the bell. On April 1, John [Eli]⁸² Meyers received a single payment of \$90 (his traveling companions James Miller and A. B. Newcomb are not among the recipients). On April 9, Hiram Mott received \$15 in cash.

79. Roundy, Journal; Gardner, Snow, Record Book, 1850, Church History Library. The duplicate listing may mean that the Iowa City group signed up first with Roundy and later with Snow. Hummer's followers were identified as "Old School" Presbyterians by Asa Calkin, a former Iowa City resident, in A. Calkin to Brigham Young, January 20, 1869, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers, Church History Library.

80. Lamoreaux, *Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux*, 6.

81. M[ichael]. Hummer to Brigham Young, January 26, 1869, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers; Brigham Young to Charles H. Berryhill, April 8, 1870, Brigham Young Letterbooks, Brigham Young Papers, Church History Library.

82. We could not locate a John Meyers in Eli's family, so we cannot explain the use of the name "John." Eli's uncle, of the same name, was in the gold fields and died there in October 1850, before Eli arrived.

On the eighteenth, he received three bushels of potatoes and two hundred pounds of flour at ten cents per pound (total value \$25). It was not until August 14 that Shadrach Roundy received \$11 and a credit for goods valued at \$9 at the Salt Lake mercantile store of James A. Livingston and Charles A. Kinkaid, located just south of the Council Hall on Main Street. For his part, Lamoreaux ordered two hundred pounds of flour, paid some back tithing, and spent \$8 on a stray animal bill. This left just over \$200 in his account. All of it was transferred to Samuel P. Hoyt's account on October 9. The Hoyt family arrived in the Salt Lake Valley late in September 1851 with virtually nothing to live on. Brigham Young was looking for volunteers to help settled Fillmore, the newly designated territorial capital. Hoyt responded to Young's public announcement by signing on. The last of the Hummer bell funds from Lamoreaux's account allowed Samuel and his family to outfit themselves for the trip south.⁸³

It is worth recalling that it was during the winter of 1849–50 that the Nauvoo Bell cracked and was melted down. David Lamoreaux's party arrived in Salt Lake City four days before the September 14, 1850, report in the *Deseret News* about plans to enlarge and recast the bell. This timing in Salt Lake City may have contributed to conflicting stories that confuse one bell with another, including the misconception that David (some accounts include his brother Andrew) brought the Nauvoo Bell to Salt Lake in 1848 (or later). As noted earlier, the Nauvoo Bell arrived in Salt Lake City on October 2, 1847, with the Charles C. Rich emigrant company. Andrew Lamoreaux traveled to Utah in 1848 in a large company headed by Willard Richards.

The confusion over which bell came west with which emigrant company surfaces most often in accounts influenced by a series of next-generation Lamoreaux family histories. All of these stories borrow the details of the Hummer bell incident and apply them to the Nauvoo Bell. The first two of three interrelated Lamoreaux stories are biographical sketches based in part on an interview with David Lamoreaux. The first is a short, undated biographical sketch titled "The Nauvoo Bell."

83. Trustee-in-Trust, Ledger A, David B. Lamoreaux account, March 20, 25; April 1, 9, 18; August 14, 18; and October 9, 1851; and Trustee-in-Trust, Journal B, David B. Lamoreaux account, p. 168, April 9; p. 122, March 20, 25; April 1, 18; August 14, 18; and October 9, 1851. Information from these sources was shared by Grant Anderson, a Church History specialist, Church History Library. Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1892–1904), 4:303–4, s.v. "Samuel P. Hoyt."

It was written by one of David Lamoreaux's daughters sometime after his death in 1905 and before 1943. Besides telling the Hummer story as if it took place in Nauvoo, this account brings the bell from England, changes Presbyterian to Methodist, and hangs the bell on Brigham Young's schoolhouse. All of these errors are common elements in Utah accounts. The story of the bell occupies the first third of this biography:

The Nauvoo Bell has a romantic story as told to me by my father, David B. Lamoreaux.

The Bell was placed on the Temple at Nauvoo, was purchased and donated by the members of the English saints and brought to America by apostle Wilford Woodruff.

Nov. 19th 1848 the Temple was destroyed; at this time the gentiles were persecuting the Saints and destroyed everything they could not use, taking the cherished Bell and putting it on the Methodist Church. It grieved the Saints so much they decided to do something about it. They made their plans to repossess it.

One stormy night the men gathered in secret and without horses pulled the wagon to the Church and lowered the Bell, pushed and pulled the wagon by hand to the edge of the Mississippi River and carefully concealing it in the water. Andrew Lamoreaux and his brother, David, were chosen to bring the Bell to Utah with their families, concealing the Bell in their wagon with their provision. The families walked so the Bell might ride.

In the notes we have, it states three dates the Bell arrived here, 1848 - 1851 - 1853. The Bell was used on Brigham Young's School House for many years.⁸⁴

The second Lamoreaux story is a close restating of the first. It is a pamphlet-sized life history of David B. Lamoreaux written and published by a daughter-in-law in 1946. It says that "a Methodist minister, having his eye on it for his own church, removed the bell one night, unobserved by the Mormon leader" (Brigham Young), who intended to take it west. David Lamoreaux and his brother Andrew learned of the bell's removal and invited others to help them retrieve the bell from its new owner. The group accomplished the task during the night and hid the bell "in a boggy marsh until it could be loaded into David's

84. Coauthor Shannon Tracy obtained a copy of "The Nauvoo Bell" from Lois Leetham Tanner, who got her copy from Edith Smith Elliot. The Lamoreaux family refers to this biographical sketch as the Lamoreaux "letter." The "letter" ends by listing the names three surviving daughters: Maud Lamoreaux (1871–1965), Nell Lamoreaux Clayton (1873–1943), and Lulu Lamoreaux Jones (1879–1949).

wagon before crossing the frozen Mississippi River. This made his load so heavy that members of his family were forced to walk most of the way across the plains.”⁸⁵

The third version of the Lamoreaux story is found in a 1957 family publication called *Our Grand-Mother—Jane—the Pioneer*. This variant offers greater precision than the others. It is based on the diary of Jane Mathers (Savage). The story begins in the fall of 1846, when Nauvoo was being overrun by vigilantes. A group of Latter-day Saint men became aware of a plot to steal the Nauvoo Bell from the temple tower. This group was led by David Lamoreaux and included a few of his friends. They used facemasks to disguise themselves as members of the mob. Then, just as the vandals were lowering the bell from the tower to the ground, Lamoreaux drove his own wagon underneath the bell, and “in a flash the brethren were off.” The invaders thought the thieves were part of their own group. In a few minutes, the intruders discovered their mistake, but it was too late. David’s group proceeded out of town and hid the bell in the muddy banks of the Mississippi River. The bell remained hidden until the twenty-sixth of September when it was removed and taken to Winter Quarters, and from there to Salt Lake.⁸⁶

Meanwhile, three years after his expulsion from his church, Michael Hummer, now a resident of Keokuk, Iowa, became frustrated over his failed attempts to collect the remainder of the monies owed him by the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City. Early in 1851, he filed with the district court in Iowa City a bill of complaint against the church. On March 18, board president S. H. Hazard and the board of trustees responded with two handwritten, seven-page documents. One, a response to Hummer’s bill of complaint, reviewed Hummer’s role in managing the church finances and objected to his alleged unwillingness to take counsel. For example, he went forward, it said, with plans for a church building more elaborate than the congregation could afford.⁸⁷

85. Lamoreaux, *Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux*, 6. This version of the story is repeated in Darwin Wolford, *Andrew Locey and David Burlock Lamoreaux; the Brothers Who Recovered the Nauvoo Bell* (Rexburg, Idaho: Darwin Wolford, 1998), 9–10.

86. Ruth Savage Hilton, *Our Grand-Mother—Jane [Mathers Savage]—the Pioneer* (Oakland, Calif.: [Brigham Young University Extension Division, Publication Services], 1957): 21–27.

87. Thomas Hughes, “1851 Response to Bill of Complaint Brought by Rev. Hummer against the Church,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2048>.

The second document, a cross bill, set forth questions the board wanted Hummer to answer in court. In addition, it argued that Hummer had removed property from the church without board approval. Specifically, it said that “Hummer, violently and forcibly,” entered the church “and took from the Cupola thereof one large bell” owned by the church “and worth, as these respondents believe, about five hundred dollars.” The cross bill also classified as stolen the Bibles, pulpit furniture, and other items that Hummer said the board approved for removal. On March 19, Hummer’s attorney informed the court that Hummer had been “found a monomaniac” by a jury in the probate court of Lee County, Iowa. The premise of this decision was that since Michael Hummer was in constant communication with the spirits of another world, he was incompetent to care for matters in this world. The probate court appointed three men as guardians of Hummer’s person and belongings.⁸⁸

These counterarguments did not resolve the issues of actions and ownership. Changes in church leadership, financial instability, and other priorities within the church delayed the resolution for two years. One narrative says that in 1855 the court awarded Hummer the \$650 promised him. At the same time, Hummer was held responsible for the loss of the bell. The value was charged against his claim, giving him legal ownership, but it reduced the cash payout to \$150. Ultimately, the histories say, this ruling motivated Hummer to seek out and, if possible, to recover the missing bell.⁸⁹

The unsettled issue of Hummer’s salary was finally resolved through the dedicated efforts of Rev. John Crozier. Because of a long-time acquaintance, Crozier believed he could negotiate a settlement. Crozier served as pastor and chairman of the board of trustees at First Presbyterian Church from May to August 1853. However, the exchange of ideas took place mostly by mail during September and October. Some of the letters were not getting through because Hummer had moved from Keokuk, Lee County, Iowa, just across the Mississippi from Hamilton, Hancock County, Illinois. In a “Dear Brother” letter dated September 22,

88. S. B. Gardner, “1851 Cross Bill Filed by the Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church against Rev. Hummer,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2049>.

89. Gallaher, “Hummer’s Bell,” 155–64; Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 433–34. A popular summary of the Hummer story, based on the earlier histories, is Don Doyle Brown, “The Preacher and the Bell,” in *Tell a Tale of Iowa: 50 True Stories of Iowa’s Past* (Des Moines, Iowa: Wallace-Homestead, 1980), 127–29.

Hummer proposed that the two of them meet on the first Tuesday of October at the fall meeting of the presbytery of Iowa, a gathering of a group of local leaders. "My highest regards to Mrs. Crozier and yourself," the letter said in closing, "yours in christian union, M. Hummer."⁹⁰

Crozier arrived in Burlington, Des Moines County, in Iowa's south-east corner on October 5. He soon learned that Hummer had applied to be reinstated in the church but was refused. The presbytery adjourned earlier that day, and Hummer left town. Crozier drove west eight miles to the rural farm town of Middletown, where he found Hummer. They "had an interview of several hours." Hummer rejected the highest offer the trustees had authorized Crozier to make, that is, "to pay him \$500, \$400 down and the other hundred in one year." With no better option, Crozier asked Hummer for a counter proposal. "Hummer offered to settle for \$400 in cash, \$100 at the end of a year at ten percent interest, and all court costs and attorney's fees up to \$50." This was an achievable deal. Crozier penned a letter to the Board of Trustees detailing his efforts. Understanding that the trustees would make the final decision, Crozier offered in a postscript a word of advice: "Humiliating as I consider the proposition here enclosed I would nevertheless say *accept!* Agree with thine adversary quickly." The signed agreement charged the missing bell to Michael Hummer, and its value was deducted from his claim. The bell "was certainly his at last," Crozier wrote, "whether it was his at first or not." The board of trustees approved a payment of \$490.⁹¹

Brigham Young and Hummer's Bell

A half continent away and two years after Hummer received his overdue salary, Brigham Young heard about a bell in the Bishop's Storehouse that some said had once hung in a church in Iowa City. He asked Asa Calkin (the tithing clerk who had purchased the bell) to enquire of the Presbyterian Church there. Young offered two options. First, he would buy the bell for a reasonable price. (He did not know that Hummer owned the bell.) Second, if they wanted the bell, he would gladly

90. Michael Hummer, "1853 Letter from Rev. Hummer to Rev. Crozier," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2052>.

91. John Crozier, "1853 Report to the Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2051>; Van Der Zee, "History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City," 549; George W. Clark, "1853 Request for Rev. Michael Hummer to Be Paid \$490.00," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2055>.

return it for what Calkin had paid for it. Instead of writing directly to the board of trustees, Calkin wrote to his brother Charles Calkin, an Iowa City resident. In his July 31, 1855, letter, Asa shared the history of the Hummer bell. He said that it had no inscription and that it weighed 745 pounds.⁹² This is the first known estimate of the Hummer bell's weight and the unusual lack of a bell-maker's inscription.⁹³

Charles inquired of others and was told that its ownership was in question. Among those he contacted was board member Henry Murray, a thirty-nine-year-old Irish physician and generous donor to the church. Murray's name was high on the list of subscribers willing to help buy a replacement for Hummer's bell for the North Presbyterian Church of Iowa City. The First Presbyterian Church had changed its name after some members had pulled out and organized the New School Presbyterian Church, formally called the First Constitutional Presbyterian Church of Iowa City. Calkin provided Murray a copy of Brigham Young's letter. Calkin told him that because of the indifferent attitude of others he met with, he felt he "could be of no service to the trustees." He informed his brother Asa "that they did not wish to interfere in the matter but leave it with their agent at Salt Lake."⁹⁴

Though hesitant to get involved with the bell's ownership at that time, the North Presbyterian Church's board of trustees moved forward to finish the church building. The new minister, Silas H. Hazard, collected \$500 from eastern donors and the board secured a \$1,000 loan to help fund the work, which included repairing "the Bell-deck [which had been] torn up by some hand of violence." On February 25, 1850, Hazard preached a sermon of dedication. Church membership had dropped to twenty over Hummer's theological shift. Hazard increased it to forty-five. Over a period of years, the church was adorned with other furnishings. By the spring of 1850, members had pledged \$514 toward the purchase of a bell. Early in 1856 "their house of worship was extensively repaired and thoroughly re-decorated at an expense of several hundred dollars." But in May, sparks from an adjacent planing mill started a fire on the roof. It spread and destroyed the entire church building. The trustees met the next day and appointed Dr. Murray, Dr. Cochran, and

92. A. Calkin to "Dear Brother," July 31, 1855, Brigham Young Letterbooks.

93. A. Calkin to Brigham Young, January 20, 1869, CR 1234, box 33, file 2, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

94. C. M. Galkin, "[1800s] Letter from CM Galkin to Murray re: Bell," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2129>.

H. D. Downey to begin planning for a larger and finer replacement. The congregation turned again to meetings in other churches and public buildings.⁹⁵

It was in this context that in 1857 Milton Cochrane, president of the board of trustees, wrote to Brigham Young concerning the whereabouts of the bell. Cochran told Young the bell belonged to the First (North) Presbyterian Church in Iowa City. Through correspondence with persons in Salt Lake City, Cochrane said he was “satisfied that the bell is now in the possession of your people.” No record exists of President Young’s reply.⁹⁶

A year later, church members met for the first time in the basement of their new house of worship. But a national financial panic and relocation of the state capital to Des Moines made it impossible even to pay the pastor’s salary. In 1862, a new pastor, Samuel M. Osmond, who would serve a record-setting seventeen years, revived interest in fundraising. His dedicated service brought people into the church, and membership reached more than two hundred. Donations and a major loan peaked in 1868 at \$7,700. Osmond dedicated the new church in 1865—without a bell.⁹⁷

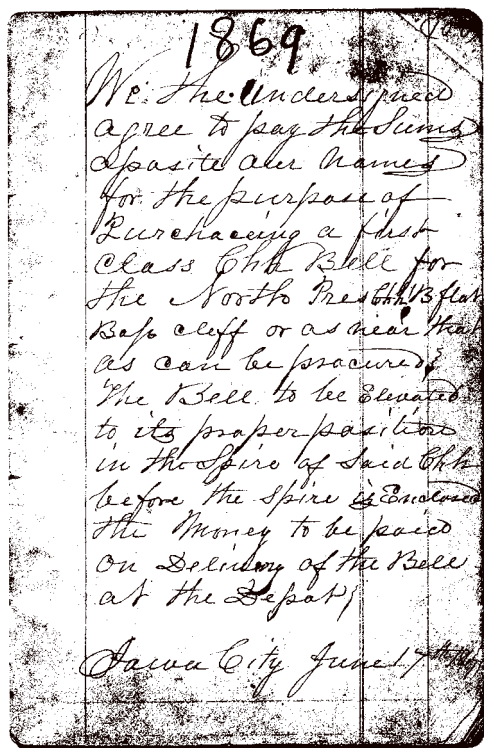
Church leaders launched a fund-raising campaign in June 1867 “for the purpose of purchasing a first class Church Bell for the North Pres. Ch. B flat base cleff [bass clef] or as near that as can be procured.” They hoped to install the bell before the spire was enclosed. Apparently, the campaign failed to reach its funding target. Seventeen months later, in November 1868, Osmond wrote to Brigham Young to inquire if the Hummer bell was in Utah. Young confirmed its presence. The bell had been lying idle ever since it arrived, he said. Reiterating the position he held in 1855, Young offered to part with the bell under the right conditions—if the Presbyterians could prove ownership.⁹⁸ In response, Osmond said the trustees would like to receive the bell as soon as possible. He would pay transportation costs, but

95. Van Der Zee, “History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City,” 544–45, 551–52, 556; “1855 Subscription Ledger for a Bell for the North Presbyterian Church in Iowa City,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2056>.

96. Milton B. Cochrane to Brigham Young, April 21, 1857, CR 1234 1, box 25, folder 13, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

97. Van Der Zee, “History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City,” 554–56.

98. A. Calkin to “Dear Brother,” July 31, 1855, Brigham Young Letterbooks; Brigham Young to S. M. Osmond, November 30, 1868, Brigham Young Letterbooks.



Those who signed this subscription ledger to help pay for a “first class church bell tuned to a B flat” agreed to pay “on Delivery of the Bell at the Depot” in Iowa City. Subscription ledger, 1867–1872, courtesy Iowa City Public Library.

the congregation could not raise the money to satisfy Young’s selling price.⁹⁹

As a follow-up, the board of trustees published a notice in the *New York Tribune* in January 1869 stating that Brigham Young would be willing to return the bell to Iowa City if the trustees paid transportation costs. An excited Michael Hummer, now living in Kansas City, Missouri, read the notice enthusiastically. He wrote to Brigham Young declaring that he, not the North Presbyterian Church, was the rightful owner of the bell. Hummer said that he purchased the bell from Andrew McNeeley in 1844 in West Troy, New York, and that McNeeley’s name was “cast upon the bell.”¹⁰⁰

99. S. M. Osmond to Brigham Young, December 22, 1868, Incoming Correspondence,” Brigham Young Papers. Aurner says that in 1868 Osmond learned that “some returned California gold hunters let the secret out,” which led him to write to Brigham Young. This implies an 1868 return, but genealogical information and census records prove that all three returned home in the 1850s to move their families from Iowa: Eli Miles left after the February 1850 birth of his son Joseph and returned more than nine months before the birth of his son James on September 1856 in Nevada; A. B. Newcomb’s daughter Josephine was born in Iowa in 1848 and his daughter Jessie in 1857 in California; James Miller’s son James was born in 1847 in Iowa, daughter Jenetta in 1851 in Wisconsin, and daughter Mary in 1854 in California.

100. M. Hummer to Brigham Young, January 26, 1869, CR 1234 1, box 33, folder 5, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

The company Hummer described as the McNeeley Bell Company in West Troy, New York, was actually named the Meneely Bell Foundry of Troy, New York. (A common problem of the company at that time was that people mistakenly called it by the name “McNeeley.”) Andrew Meneely, the son of immigrants from North Ireland, established The Meneely Bell Foundry in 1826 in West Troy (now Watervliet), New York. He had learned his trade at age fifteen as an apprentice to Julius Hanks, whose father, Colonel Benjamin Hanks, had created a bronze bell foundry in adjacent Gibbonsville. Shortly after Benjamin Hanks opened the new facility, he transferred the business to his son Julius Hanks, his younger brother Horatio, and to Andrew Meneely. The business moved to Troy, New York, in 1825. Andrew Meneely continued to produce bells until his death in 1851 at age forty-nine. His sons and their descendants continued the business in two separate companies until 1951.¹⁰¹

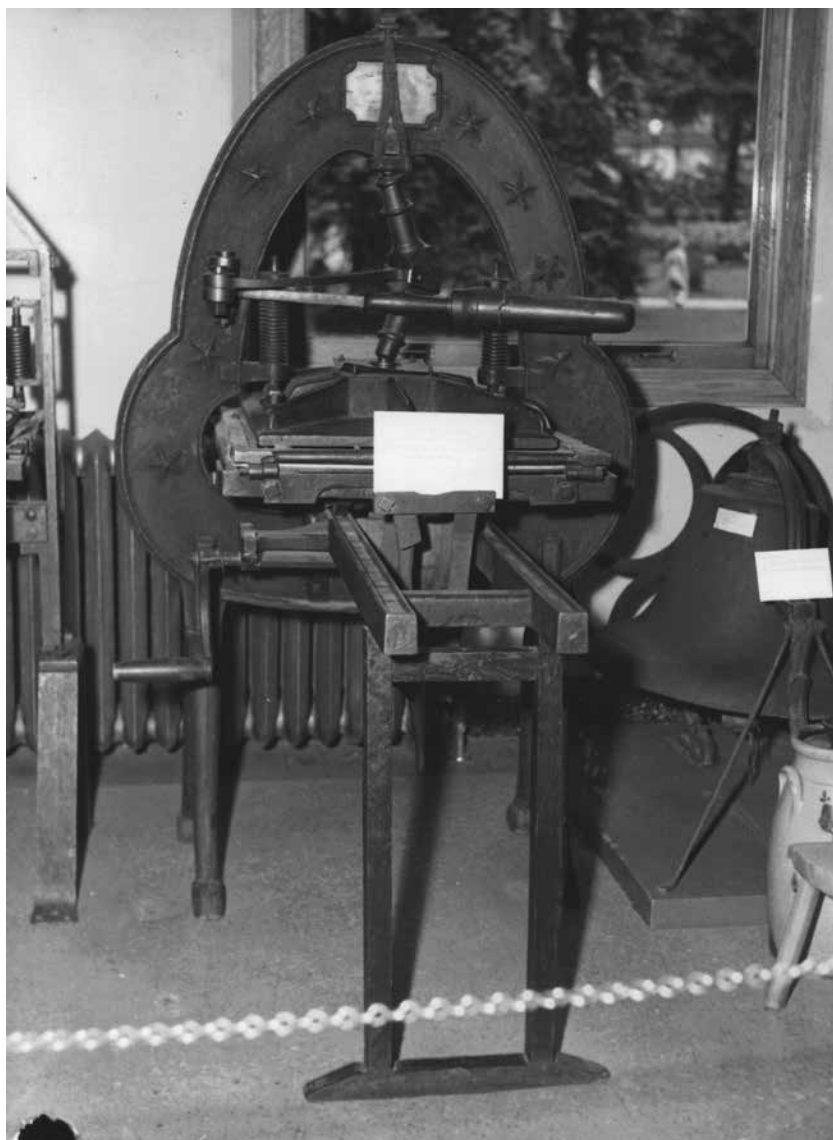
In February 1869, Mrs. M. Wheeler, Michael Hummer’s niece, wrote to Brigham Young about the bell. The family had heard rumors that the bell was in Utah. However, she said, her uncle did not accept that explanation as true. Wheeler said she would rather learn that “the bell was sunk in the [Great Salt] Lake than to hear it had gon [*sic*] back to Iowa City.” Besides, she added, “my poor uncle has had much to contend with.”¹⁰² Her sentiments reflect a keen awareness of the impact on Hummer’s life of the contest between himself and the church he once headed.

Young was prepared with an answer. Soon after his November exchange of letters with the Presbyterian minister Samuel M. Osmond, Young secured details about the bell in correspondence with his former clerk, Asa Calkin, who was living in St. George, Utah. Calkin reviewed for Young the problems of discerning the ownership of the bell and told the president what he had paid for the bell.¹⁰³ With this information in hand, Young replied to Wheeler’s inquiry with a letter addressed directly

101. Paul Grondahl, “Andrew Meneely (1802–1851): Founder of World-Renowned Meneely Bell Foundry,” *Times Union*, December 5, 2013, <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Andrew-Meneely-1802-1851-Founder-of-4993148.php>.

102. Mrs. M. Wheeler to Brigham Young, February 16, 1869, CR 1234 1, box 33, file 11, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

103. A. Calkin to Brigham Young, January 20, 1869, CR 1234 1, box 33, folder 2, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers; Ronald G. Watt, “A Tale of Two Bells: Nauvoo Bell and Hummer’s Bell,” *Nauvoo Journal* 11, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 37.



The Book of Mormon printing press, *center*; the “Old Bell” (Hummer bell), other bells, *right*, and hundreds of other historical objects were moved from the Deseret Museum in 1919 to this storage area in the Church Museum on Temple Square. Courtesy Church History Library.

to Michael Hummer. Young said he would give up the bell to the “first properly authorized person who will produce *bona fide* proof of ownership & authority to receive it, & who will refund the money expended thereon which is between six and seven hundred dollars.”¹⁰⁴

Michael Hummer replied to President Young’s letter in May 1869 with another query: What proof would he need to claim the bell? Young answered that he needed affidavits certifying ownership from two or more reliable persons “whose veracity is not likely to be a subject of question.” Young also expected to be reimbursed for his expenses.¹⁰⁵ This was the last correspondence between Brigham Young and Michael Hummer, for Hummer never replied.

But the story does not end here. The fund-raising campaign launched in 1867 by Samuel Osmond went well enough that the board of trustees of the North Presbyterian Church of Iowa City approved the purchase of a bell from the Meneely Bell Foundry. The bell arrived in July 1869. The cost was \$962.30 plus shipping. In August, the trustees hired a contractor to build the spire. However, the bell failed to satisfy expectations. For some, it was too small; for others, the pitch was not acceptable. So, church members increased their donations to fund an exchange of the new two-thousand-pound bell for one at least a thousand pounds heavier. Instead of a bell tuned to B flat in the bass clef, they ordered an E-flat tone. Three months later the rejected pound bell was on its way back to the foundry.¹⁰⁶

In February 1870, Brigham Young received a letter from Charles H. Berryhill, an Iowa City resident. Although not a member of the Presbyterian Church, Berryhill expressed “an interest in having the bell restored.”¹⁰⁷ Young asked his second counselor, Daniel H. Wells, to respond. Young’s expectations had not changed. Berryhill was to pay for transportation, reimburse the church for its cost in buying the bell,

104. Brigham Young to M. Hummer, March 24, 1869, Brigham Young Letterbooks, italics in original.

105. Brigham Young to Rev. M. Hummer, May 15, 1869, Brigham Young Letterbooks.

106. “1869 Church Bell Subscription Ledger,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2066>; and “1869 Contract for the Building of a Spire for the First Presbyterian Church,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2067>.

107. Charles H. Berryhill to Brigham Young, February 21, 1870, CR 1234 1, box 33, folder 12, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

and verify the bell's true ownership.¹⁰⁸ Berryhill's reply to Wells came quickly. He wanted to know "the nature of the claim that Prest. Young holds on it." Furthermore, Berryhill shared his belief that the Union Pacific Railroad would transport the bell to Iowa without charge for the Iowa church.¹⁰⁹

Wells did not feel comfortable in proceeding without Young's involvement, and since the President was en route to southern Utah, the matter would just have to wait. But Berryhill was impatient. He wrote again, this time to Orson Pratt, stating that he needed to know why Brigham Young wanted six to seven hundred dollars for the bell. Berryhill wrote: "It certainly cannot be possible that your church with its professions of Christianity can be the possessors and holders of stolen property knowingly, but you will perceive that it looks suspicious in Mr. Wells failing to advise us as to the nature of the claim against the bell." Berryhill concluded, "If we knew . . . that it was a just claim, we might possibly make some arrangement to pay it."¹¹⁰

Three weeks later, Brigham Young was back in Salt Lake City. The reply he dictated reveals his displeasure with the tone of Berryhill's letter. Wearying of the seemingly unresolvable situation, President Young once again defended the Church's need to be reimbursed for what it had paid "a Mr. Mott, of Iowa, on his way to California, who offered to sell it for six or seven hundred dollars; we paid him for the bell." Young reassured Berryhill that the bell was boxed up, safe, and, when he last saw it, in good condition. He said, "The bell we have never used, & probably never should use it, it is not such a one as we want." Young concluded, "I am still writing to let you know all that I can concerning it, and now if you are disposed to prove the property, pay charges, and take the bell away, I shall be very glad to have you do so, if not, you will do me a great kindness not to trouble me any more about it."¹¹¹

For Brigham Young, too much time had been expended on the issue. Charles Berryhill did not respond, and the matter remained unresolved. The bell would remain in storage in the tithing yard for another

108. Daniel Wells to Charles H. Berryhill, March 3, 1870, Brigham Young Letterbooks.

109. Charles H. Berryhill to Daniel Wells, March 14, 1870, Brigham Young Letterbooks.

110. Charles H. Berryhill to Orson Pratt, April 8, 1870, CR 1234 1, box 33, folder 12, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

111. Brigham Young to Charles H. Berryhill, April 29, 1870, Brigham Young Letterbooks.

thirty-nine years—from 1870 to 1909. During those same years, in Iowa, the story of the theft of Hummer's bell appeared in local histories. A new poetic retelling circulated in religious circles in 1907.¹¹² But in Utah, the passage of time and the death of those who knew the story of the controversial Hummer bell eventually created gaps in knowledge of the identity and the location of the Iowa bell.

While Berryhill's exchange with Brigham Young went nowhere, his neighbor in Iowa City had not given up. The campaign to buy a larger bell launched by Samuel M. Osmond in September 1869 had taken off. The fund drive reached its goal early in 1872, and the church placed an order with the Meneely foundry. The new, larger bell arrived in March and was installed in a spire reaching skyward 153 feet. No doubt the members of the North Presbyterian Church of Iowa City expected to enjoy the tones of their 2,874-pound, E-flat bell for years to come. Unfortunately, on June 20, 1877, the spire, the bell, and most of the front of the building were torn off by a tornado. The spire was replaced with a short battlement tower with a crenellated finish that reflected the architectural pattern of castle towers. Reports on this change don't mention a bell. The congregation enjoyed this church for more than a century before moving to a new building. The old building and its land were annexed to the University of Iowa campus and preserved for cultural activities.¹¹³

Retelling the Story

For a number of years after Brigham Young's death on August 28, 1877—and Michael Hummer's passing two years later in Wyandotte, Kansas—interest in the Hummer bell waned. The residents of Iowa City were reminded of the story by its presence in local histories published in the

112. See "Hummer's Bell," *The Presbyterian Church in Iowa, 1837–1900*, prepared by a Committee of the Synod of Iowa, Joseph W. Hubbard, D.D., Chairman (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Jones and Wells, the Superior Press, 1907, https://archive.org/stream/presbyterianchuroopres/presbyterianchuroopres_djvu.txt). A later poem, the eleven-stanza "Hummer's Bell," by Samuel Magill, was published in *Lone Tree [Iowa] Reporter*, October 14, 1926.

113. "1869 Church Bell Subscription Ledger"; Nick Fetty, "Church Marks 175 Years of History," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, September 14, 2014, <https://www.press-citizen.com/story/news/local/2014/09/14/church-marks-years-history/15646557/>; Vernon Trollinger, *Haunted Iowa City* (Charleston, S.C.: Haunted America, 2011), 70–71.

late 1880s and early 1890s. But its identity among Utah artifact custodians was lost.

Perhaps it was the detailed recitation of the whole story in Iowa histories that caused the Rev. John Crozier to reflect on Hummer's experience with his opponents. In a letter to a Presbyterian minister in 1890, Crozier said of Michael Hummer, "Undoubtedly his mind became unsettled. He was a man of vigorous intellect & an orator by of *ungovernable temper*. That Scotch-Irish Virginia-Kentucky blood which is but another name for '*Adam unsanctified*' was often too much for him. But in many of the things charged against him he '*was more sinned against than sinning*'. . . . And yet I do believe that had a course of Christian tenderness been taken it is possible many years of efficient labor might have been wrought by him."¹¹⁴

In 1911, an Iowa newspaper published Elizabeth Irish's recollections of her father's attempt in 1895 to retrieve the Hummer bell. General Charles W. Irish was an Iowa City engineer and railroad surveyor who had been appointed United States Surveyor General for Nevada by President Cleveland in 1886. Irish was called to Washington in 1893 to head the Bureau of Irrigation and Inquiry. One of his responsibilities was to examine irrigation water resources in the western states. It was while traveling through Utah in 1895 with his daughter Elizabeth that Irish befriended "a large number of pioneer Mormons." When Irish told his unnamed Latter-day Saint friends about Hummer's bell, they "asked if he had any means of by which he could identify the bell." Irish told them "that he had seen the bell many times, and that the name of the foundry and city were stamped on [t]he bell." By appointment the next day, the men took Charles and Elizabeth to an outbuilding in the tithing yard and showed him an old bell which they believed "Brigham Young had brought across the plains with him." Elizabeth Irish said the men were "all armed with magnifying glasses." Before long they found the name of the foundry and the city of its creator "which General Irish had told them was imprinted on the bell."¹¹⁵

114. Van Der Zee, "History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City, 530 n. 24, italics in original.

115. Elizabeth Irish, "Identification of the Old Hummer Bell by the Late General Charles W. Irish of Iowa City, Iowa," *Lone Tree [Iowa] Reporter*, October 13, 1926, section 7, p. 1. A similar article followed: F. M. Irish, "Hummer and His Bell," *Des Moines Register*, May 22, 1927. Information on Charles Irish's life, is from "Biographical Note," in MSC 362, Manuscript Register, Papers of Charles Wood Irish, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa

Charles Irish wondered what the men knew about the bell's history. Their response melded together the story of three separate bells: the Nauvoo Bell, Brigham Young's schoolhouse bell, and the Hummer bell. According to Elizabeth Irish, "They stated it was first used for church purposes, and to call the workmen to their work each day." This was the Nauvoo Bell (which no longer existed). Her Latter-day Saint hosts also said that "in later years when Brigham Young built a private school house for his own children the bell was placed in a cupola on it and was used to call the children to school." These older men were not aware that the schoolhouse bell had its own history. That bell had found a permanent home in the Church History Museum. Elizabeth said the men thought that when the schoolhouse was demolished, the Hummer bell "was retired to the old Tithing House, and was almost forgotten." (Actually, the Iowa City bell rested in the tithing office from 1851 until its transfer to the Deseret Museum.) Elizabeth Irish said the "old pioneers gave [her father] their word of honor, stating that when all the old pioneer Mormons had passed away, the bell, of course, would not be of interest to the younger generation, and that they would consent to have the 'Hummer Bell' [sent] back to the General or his daughter."¹¹⁶

Sometime before Elizabeth published her account of Colonel Irish's visit, she became aware that the old tithing house had been demolished and the Hummer bell "placed in the 'Mormon Historical Chamber' of that city, where it can now be viewed by interested visitors." She said a Latter-day Saint friend sent her a photograph of the bell in its new location. Her friend reassured her: "You may be sure if anyone gets that bell, it will be Miss Elizabeth Irish."¹¹⁷

General Irish's story, as retold by his daughter in 1911 (and reprinted in 1926), contains one element that helps confirm the identity of the Hummer bell. In 1895, the general's Utah hosts insisted that the bell carried no evidence of its maker's name. Irish convinced them otherwise using magnifying glasses to reveal what remained of the original inscription. This evidence squares with the report forty years earlier of

Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa, http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/scua/msc/tomsc400/msc362/msc362_irishcharles.html.

116. Elizabeth Irish, "Identification of the Old Hummer Bell," *Des Moines Register*, May 14, 1911.

117. Irish, "Identification of the Old Hummer Bell," *Des Moines Register*. See also F. M. Irish, "Hummer and His Bell," *Lone Tree [Iowa] Reporter*, October 14, 1926, section 7, p. 5, <https://byufamilyhistorylibrary.newspapers.com/image/52269475>.

tithing clerk Asa Calkin, who told Brigham Young that the inscription had been ground off. In other words, Irish agreed with Calkin's observation that the bell had been defaced. The Hummer bell had "spoken." For those willing to take a closer look, the controversial artifact revealed its maker and place of origin.

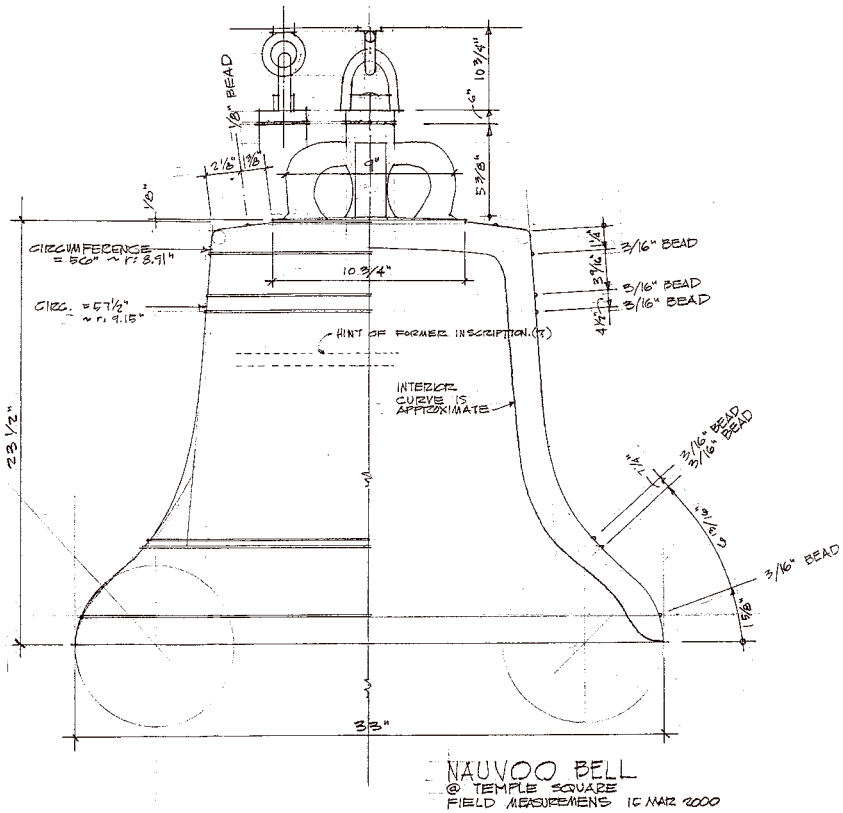
When President Gordon B. Hinckley authorized an authentic reconstruction of the Nauvoo Temple with a bell in its tower, the Hummer bell once again underwent a close inspection. In the spring of 2000, three architects working on the temple project measured the bell hanging in the campanile. A draftsman's drawing of their measurements reveals a bell 23½ inches tall and 33 inches wide at the bottom. The thickness of the metal is about 2½ inches. The architects also found a hint of an inscription in a filed-off area on the bell's side, about 15 inches from the top. The area is about 2½ inches tall and 13 inches long. This discovery supports Irish's observation and Calkin's explanation that someone had filed off the manufacturer's name and place of business, no doubt to hide its origin. This was a common practice when used bells were sold. A charcoal rubbing made of what remained of the inscription lacks clarity. Yet some have seen tell-tale letters in the rubbing that suggest the name of bell-maker Meneely.¹¹⁸

The caretakers who told Irish that the Hummer bell once hung in the steeple of Brigham Young's "old schoolhouse" were confused. Yet, their assertion was not the only such claim. In 1876, Salt Lake City's *Daily Tribune* published an article retelling the Lamoreaux story. The newspaper's version has Young himself directing Lamoreaux and others to steal the Nauvoo Bell from a Methodist church "not many miles from Nauvoo" and transport it to Zion. After the bell arrived in Utah, the *Tribune* says it "was kicking about the Prophet's premises, where the young Mormon hoodlums amused themselves by ringing it." The article concludes with the common claim that the stolen bell was placed in the steeple of Young's schoolhouse, where it was used, according to the paper, to call Young's children to Sunday school.¹¹⁹

Another example of the Hummer bell finding its way to a school tower appeared in a *New York Times* feature article about "legends or fanciful stories connected with" church bells in England, Europe, and the United

118. Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple*, 277, 280, and 287 n. 97. Rebecca K. Hyatt's "Nauvoo Bell" research file contains a photocopy of a charcoal rubbing of the inscription.

119. "Brigham's Church Bell," *Daily Tribune* (Salt Lake City), July 1, 1876, 4.



The field measurements of the “Nauvoo Bell” (that is, the Hummer bell) on Temple Square recorded on March 15, 2000, show a diameter of 33 inches and a height of 33½ inches. The drawing also identifies with dashes the location of “a hint of an earlier inscription.” Copy in Shannon Tracy’s files.

States. This 1899 account is written from a Midwestern perspective and identifies it as “a bell now hanging over a private schoolhouse of a Mormon prophet in Salt Lake City.” The story does not explain how the bell made its way west. Instead, it tells of the unnamed pastor’s disagreement with church officials over his salary and his attempt to remove the bell to resolve the question. The *Times* article says that it was Presbyterian officials who learned of Hummer’s effort “and rushed to the rescue of their property. They permitted the bell to be lowered to the ground, but then seized it, loaded it in a wagon, and drove away.”¹²⁰

120. L. A. Maynard, “Stories of Church Bells,” *New York Times*, June 25, 1899, 14.

Reliable evidence confirms that the Hummer bell was not used at the Brigham Young schoolhouse. Young himself insisted correctly that the Hummer bell had never been used for *any* purpose. Nevertheless, the adobe school built just east of the Beehive House in 1860 did feature a small brass bell. That bell, smaller than the Hummer bell, and clearly marked, has survived. After thirty-two years atop the school, the bell was removed in 1902. Mrs. Edwin F. Holmes purchased the building with plans to raze it. She presented the bell to the recently organized Utah Historical Society, where it was photographed. Because the society had no display space, they found a new home for it. The school bell now resides in the Pioneer Memorial Museum of the International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP) at the head of Salt Lake's Main Street.¹²¹

In addition to the school bell, the DUP museum has on permanent display the Brigham Young farm bell, a large iron bell made by the G. W. Coffin & Co., of Cincinnati, Ohio. The original location of that bell was at Young's six-hundred-acre, working dairy and experimental farm. The farm included barns, fields, pastures, and orchards. It was located near Seventh East and Twenty-Third South in Salt Lake City. The 1863 farmhouse was moved in 1975 and became part of This Is the Place Heritage Park, at 2601 Sunnyside Avenue.¹²²

A second iron bell made by the Coffin foundry has also survived. It was hung in 1873 in a new belfry built over the entrance to the west wing assembly rooms of the Salt Lake Fourteenth Ward meetinghouse. This bell was removed from the meetinghouse during a renovation in 1909. Seven years later, in October 1916, the ward gifted the old bell to the Deseret Museum, and Bishop George Q. Morris personally delivered it. This bell, measuring about twenty inches high and with a diameter of twenty-five inches at its base, is preserved by the Church History Museum on West Temple Street.¹²³

121. *Deseret News*, August 4, 1902, July 28, 1904; Watt, "Tale of Two Bells," 38. See also "Old Brigham Young School House Now Being Razed to the Ground," *Deseret Evening News*, August 4, 1902, 5; "Historic Relics," *Deseret Evening News*, July 28, 1904, 2.

122. *Deseret News*, August 4, 1902; July 28, 1904; "Utah News," *Millennial Star* 35, no. 46 (1873): 735.

123. "Utah News," *Millennial Star* 35, no. 46 (1873): 735; "Old Fourteenth Ward Bell Now in Museum," *Deseret Evening News*, October 24, 1916; Collection catalog, accession #20-1675, Church History Museum; Lynn M. Hilton,

Some reports identify a five-hundred-pound bell that once hung in the dome of the Salt Lake City hall as the original Nauvoo Bell. However, minutes of Salt Lake City Council meetings convincingly demonstrate that the city purchased their bell (and a clock) in 1866. The city hall bell no longer exists. It was stolen in 1910, broken up, and sold to a recycler, who reported the theft to police.¹²⁴

The friendly hosts who told General Charles Irish that the bell he saw in the tithing yard storage shed would soon be forgotten by the Latter-day Saints were correct. Sixteen years after the general's visit, Walter M. Davis sent an inquiry to Joseph F. Smith. Davis had learned that some Iowa City tourists had seen "the historic relic at Salt Lake City in 1895." (The tourists were Charles W. and Elizabeth Irish.) Davis was informed through a secretary's response that President Smith did not know the whereabouts of the bell.¹²⁵

This lack of understanding among a new generation of Latter-day Saints led to other unintentional misidentifications of the Hummer bell. Two days before the annual Pioneer Day celebration in 1931, the *Deseret News* published an article titled "Church Museum Preserves Relics of Pioneer Days." The article drew attention to "an old bell, used to assemble the pioneers at times of danger and for special conferences to be held within the walls of the city fort, is given a place of honor in the museum."¹²⁶ This description accurately describes the ways the Nauvoo Bell was used in the pioneer fort. Calling it "an old bell" seems odd, but is easily explained. The LDS Museum on Temple Square used that term itself. A printed form with typed entries identifying the location of "Exhibits of L.D.S. Museum" includes two bells displayed in the basement level. The bells sat alongside a "home made chair with cane seat," Levi Riter's pioneer rocking chair, the Ramage Press that printed the first edition of the Book of Mormon, and the 1850 *Deseret News* press. The bells, items number 39 and 40 on the list, are described as (1) "Bell. Used

ed., *Story of Salt Lake Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 125-Year History, 1847-1972* (Salt Lake City: Salt Lake Stake).

124. Salt Lake City, City Council Minutes, December 5, 1965, February 6, 13, and October 12, 1866.

125. Van Der Zee, *History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City*, 541 n. 28, which extends to 543, where Walter Davis's letter is described. Van Der Zee also says, "An attempt to reveal the identity of a bell in the Deseret Museum in Salt Lake City has not verified the supposition that it is the long lost Presbyterian bell of other days."

126. *Deseret News*, July 22, 1931, 4.

for thirty years on the Fourteenth Ward school house,” and (2) “Old Bell brought to Utah in the early days. Used for summoning the people to public assemblies. For a long time it was the only large bell in Utah.”

In 1936, a request for information about the Hummer bell arrived in Salt Lake City. A Des Moines librarian who was doing research on the Hummer bell inquired of Salt Lake librarian Johanna Sprague as to its whereabouts. According to Sprague, her Des Moines correspondent had learned that in 1910 the Iowa Historical Society had traced the bell to the “Mormon Ladies Relic Chamber,” an apparent reference to the Daughters of Utah Pioneers collection displayed in the Templeton Building.¹²⁷ Sprague questioned the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, the Church Historian’s Office, and the LDS Bureau of Information, but, of course, found no such bell identified by that name. The *Deseret News* then invited readers to share with Sprague anything they might know about the bell’s whereabouts.¹²⁸

An event in the late 1930s became the defining point in tying together the stories of the Nauvoo and Iowa City bells. On June 17, 1939, the *Deseret News* published an article headlined “Haunting Tone of Nauvoo Temple Bell Rings out Anew.” The article states that about a month earlier Joseph J. Cannon, president of the Temple Square Mission, had “rediscovered” the Nauvoo Bell in a basement corner of the Bureau of Information on Temple Square, where it had rested for years. The article said that Cannon had a rough-hewn redwood scaffolding made for the bell “on which the 1500 pound bell was hung.” The poundage of this bell is influenced by knowledge of Brigham Young’s suggestion to Willard Richards that an English bell of around 2,000 pounds would be appropriate. Asa Calkins estimated that the Hummer bell weighed 745 pounds. The Salt Lake City Scales certified the weight on July 20, 2000, as 782 pounds. One can sense in the newspaper’s statement the passion that still surrounded the Nauvoo Bell: “The Nauvoo Temple bell will ring again. Although not a stone of the million-dollar temple erected by hardy Mormon pioneers now remains at the original site on a hill above Nauvoo, Ill., the great bell, which was pulled down in 1850 when the Temple was destroyed, is now heard daily by hundreds

127. Soon after the October 1916 completion of the Utah State Capitol, the DUP moved its collection to the capitol basement.

128. “Library in Iowa Seeks Whereabouts of ‘Hummer’s Bell,’” *Deseret News*, August 10, 1936, 9.



In 1911, an unidentified woman posed with the “Old Bell” in a room of the Vermont Building rented by the Deseret Museum. The bell moved to the newly built LDS Museum on Temple Square in 1919. Courtesy Church History Library.

of tourists visiting Salt Lake.”¹²⁹ In a detailed retelling of the Lamoreaux version of the Nauvoo Bell’s history, Cannon said that the bell was “brought from seclusion and hung in a redwood belfry” in the Temple Square museum.¹³⁰

Cannon did not narrate the story on his own. In the July 1839 message, he said, “Elder Nephi L. Morris, upon seeing the bell and hearing its tone began looking up information.” That same year Morris published *The Restoration*, a faith-promoting history of the early days of the Church. Cannon quoted the material that Morris found. The extracts quoted include Brigham Young’s invitation to the English Saints to fund a bell, Young’s directive to the agent in Nauvoo to transport the bell to Winter Quarters, and David Lamoreaux’s rescue of the bell from “lawless persons [who] had hoisted the bell and were making ready to steal it.”¹³¹

Although the general story is not useful, the *Deseret News* article is helpful when it tells us that the bell was “brought from seclusion and hung in a redwood belfry” in the Temple Square museum “some months before July 1939.” Museum records confirm that the bell was moved from the basement to the main floor, where it was not only displayed in a redwood scaffolding, but also featured a new label. No longer was it seen as “an old bell.” The unnamed artifact now became “The Nauvoo Temple Bell.” The label asserts that “this bell hung in the belfry of the Nauvoo Temple.” Following a few comments about the temple construction, the label concludes: “After the Latter-day Saints were driven out, the beautiful building was ruthlessly destroyed by the mob. The bell is all we have left of this edifice.”¹³²

The unintentional renaming of the Hummer bell in 1939 caught the attention of the Church’s General Relief Society Presidency. For nearly a year, the presidency had been developing plans to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the women’s organization. In October 1939, they discussed their proposal with the First Presidency, the Presiding Bishopric, and Joseph J. Cannon, president of the Temple Square

129. “Haunting Tone of Nauvoo Temple Bell Rings Out Anew,” *Deseret News*, June 17, 1939, 9.

130. Joseph J. Cannon, “President Joseph J. Cannon’s Message,” *Temple Square Topics* 3 (July 1939): 1.

131. Joseph J. Cannon, “The President’s Message,” *Temple Square Topics* 3 (July 1939): [1–2].

132. “Nauvoo Temple Bell,” exhibit label, ca. 1939, LDS Museum (an annex to the Visitors Bureau), Salt Lake City.

Mission. During this meeting, President Cannon recalled that Brigham Young had suggested building a tower with a bell on Temple Square since the new Tabernacle was under construction and new landscaping plans were being created. Cannon's idea was immediately appealing. The Relief Society had been founded in Nauvoo. Placing a bell from that place and time seemed a wonderful way to celebrate—a bell tower that would fulfill President Young's desire. Everyone agreed: they would reintroduce the newly rediscovered "Nauvoo Bell" to the public at that celebration event. The January 1942 issue of *The Relief Society Magazine* celebrated the potential of "A Monument with a Message." The article described how David Lamoreaux and others rescued the Nauvoo Temple bell from those who were trying to steal it in September 1846 by driving a wagon beneath the bell and driving off with it.¹³³

Subsequently, architect Lorenzo S. Young made a model of the campanile—the bell tower—that would house the "Nauvoo Bell." But plans stalled. World War II tormented the nations of the earth, and the Church was not immune. The First Presidency postponed the project. Not until 1965 did they readdress the issue and authorize construction. The bell finally went on public display in September 1966. At that time, Relief Society President Belle S. Spafford was advised not to claim that the bell in the campanile had been rung in Nauvoo. "The Nauvoo Bell was melted down, so the historians tell me, almost immediately after it was brought to the valley," Mark E. Petersen, of the Council of the Twelve, informed her, "and this bell was created here in Utah. It is called the Nauvoo Bell because I believe the materials from the Nauvoo bell went into it."¹³⁴

In the interim, from 1939 (when plans were first proposed to display the bell on Temple Square) until the bell was actually put in place, the surrogate "Nauvoo Bell" was not idle. In 1944, with First Presidency approval, the bell made a special appearance in the University of Utah stadium as part of the Days of '47 Queen Coronation Pageant. In its

133. Campanile project history, ca. 1967, CR 11 47, box 1, folders 1–2, Church History Library; Mary Grant Judd, "A Monument with a Message," *Relief Society Magazine* 29, no. 1 (January 1942): 11–12; see also Mary G. Judd, "Our Permanent Centennial Memorial," *Relief Society Magazine* 28, no. 11 (November 1942): 769–70.

134. Lorenzo S. Young, campanile project architectural drawing, ca. 1941–42, CR 11 46, Church History Library; Mark E. Petersen to Belle S. Spafford, September 20, 1966, campanile project history, ca. 1967, CR 11 47, box 1, Church History Library.

announcement of the program, the *Salt Lake Tribune* offered a brief history of the bell, drawn in part from versions of the Lamoreaux family's accounts. The program included a tribute to Utah pioneers by Salt Lake City Mayor Earl J. Glade, "followed by a reenactment of the 1849 Days of '47 celebration" and the ringing of the "Nauvoo bell." Despite this apparent linking of the original Nauvoo Bell with the 1849 commemoration, the article asserted that as part of the coronation ceremony the famous bell would "make its first appearance at a general celebration in Utah."¹³⁵

The confusion over the identities of the two bells publicized to a wide audience in 1939 continued for nearly sixty years. An early example took place in November 1941, when the *Deseret News* received an inquiry from J. Kirkwood Craig, a minister at the Franklin Methodist Church, in Franklin, New Hampshire. Craig had visited Salt Lake City and toured Temple Square. He had also visited Joseph Smith's birthplace. Craig was looking for an article he had seen earlier in the *Deseret News*. He asked for a copy of and for information on any other historic bell in the area. The newspaper referred the letter to Temple Square. John H. Taylor, president of the Temple Square Mission and Bureau of Information, responded by informing Craig that he had forwarded the letter to the Historian's Office. Taylor added, "Of course if you were in Salt Lake City you saw the bell that we have in the Bureau of Information which came from the top of the Temple at Nauvoo."¹³⁶

Librarian Alvin F. Smith responded for the Office of the Church Historian. "We have not been able to locate the article referred to in your letter," he wrote, "and know of only two bells in Salt Lake City which are of historic interest, namely the Nauvoo Temple bell, which is in the Bureau of Information on the Temple grounds, and the bell of President Brigham Young's school house which is preserved in the State Capitol [the Daughters of Utah Pioneers collection]. . . . By instructions from President Brigham Young the temple bell was sent to Council Bluffs and later transferred to Salt Lake City. The tone of the bell has excellent resonance at the present time."¹³⁷

135. "Old Nauvoo Bell to Ring in Days of '47 Queen's Reign," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 16, 1944, B3.

136. John H. Taylor to J. Kirkwood Craig, December 8, 1941, Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2103>.

137. Alvin F. Smith to J. Kirkwood Craig, December 3, 1841, Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpi.org/items/show/2102>.

When Craig received these letters, he forwarded them to Jacob Van Der Zee, a Presbyterian minister and historian in Iowa City. Craig had already shared information about a grandfather, an elder in the Iowa City Presbyterian church. Any material Craig got from Salt Lake, he promised to give Van Der Zee, but he was disappointed with the “lack of information” in the letters. “I think the man who is at the head of the Presbyterian School in Salt Lake could get for you some additional information.”¹³⁸

Another example of the confused understanding, this one from late in the century, appeared in 1981 in the Church’s official magazine, the *Ensign*, in the format of an “I Have a Question” feature.¹³⁹ The answer drew heavily from a short document mentioned earlier: “The Nauvoo Bell,” written by one of David B. Lamoreaux’s daughters. Unfortunately, the use of this reminiscent account in a Church magazine negatively impacted many retellings of the story in subsequent years.¹⁴⁰ To complete her story, the author of the *Ensign* article borrowed details from the real Nauvoo Bell’s trip west in the Charles C. Rich emigrant company. On their way to Utah, the article says, the Lamoreaux brothers rang the bell “to awaken the herdsman at dawn, to signal morning prayer, to start the day’s march, and to sound during the night watches to let the Indians know that the sentry was at his post.”¹⁴¹

Not only has the confused identity of the two bells continued in Latter-day Saint circles, but questions about the Hummer bell’s disappearance still surface in southeastern Iowa. For example, in 1998, the Church Historical Department received an inquiry about the Hummer bell from Iowa City. In part the letter reads, “If the bell does still exist and whoever owns it,” and if they “would be willing to part with it, we would be willing to negotiate and would be more than willing to come

138. J. Kirkwood Craig to Jacob Van der Zee, January 5, 1942, Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2104>.

139. Lois Leetham Tanner, “I’ve Heard There Is a Story behind the Bell on Temple Square. Can You Relay It?” *Ensign* 11 (February 1981): 16. A similar version of the story appeared in 2008 on a religious blog: Jane M. Choate, “The Nauvoo Temple Bell,” *Relijournal/Christianity* (blog), February 17, 2008, <http://relijournal.com/christianity/the-nauvoo-temple-bell/>.

140. “The Nauvoo Bell,” photocopy, acquired by coauthor Shannon Tracy from Lois Leetham Tanner, the *Ensign* author, who got her copy from Edith Smith Elliott.

141. Tanner, “I’ve Heard There Is a Story.”



Curators at the LDS Museum on Temple Square moved Michael Hummer's Iowa City church bell from storage in 1939, changed the label from "Old Bell brought to Utah in the early days" (the label in 1929) to "Nauvoo Bell," and displayed it in a newly built redwood stand. Courtesy Church History Library.

and get it or pay to have it shipped.”¹⁴² At that point, corrective efforts were underway inside the Historical Department. One year later, archivist Ronald G. Watt published his account of the Hummer bell, which is the starting point for the expanded and revised narrative in the second section of this article.¹⁴³

As of this writing, the Hummer bell, accepted by many since 1939 as the original Nauvoo Temple bell remains on display in its commemorative campanile near the Tabernacle on Temple Square. Each hour it sounds a single chime, “controlled by an electronic system in the basement of the Tabernacle . . . set according to Greenwich time.”¹⁴⁴

For many years, Church-owned media outlets popularized the bell-ringing. Beginning on Sunday, July 23, 1961, KSL Radio and KSL-TV launched the use of the Temple Square bell to sound the time on the Salt Lake City stations every hour on the hour. The official beginning came as the climax of a special television program that evening, when Church President David O. McKay “pulled the clapper against the bell’s resonant shell.” The chime is activated by a signal from the Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C., that is picked up by a microphone and transmitted to the broadcast studio through a cable.¹⁴⁵

The traditional hourly “clang” of the Nauvoo Bell ended temporarily in June 2005 when the station converted to a digital, or high-definition, signal. It resumed a month later after engineers found a way to deal with

142. Mike Bobo to “Dear Friend,” November 18, 1998, Public Services Section correspondence, Church History Library.

143. Watt, “Tale of Two Bells,” 31–42.

144. “Nauvoo Bell Rings Out on Day of Thanksgiving,” *Church News*, April 13, 1991, 5.

145. “As We See It,” *Deseret News*, *Church News*, July 29, 1961, 5; “The Church Moves On,” *Improvement Era* 64 (October 1961): 696; Lynn Arave, “Nauvoo Bell Chimes Live on KSL,” *Deseret News*, April 5, 2002, <https://www.deseret-news.com/article/905692/Nauvoo-Bell-chimes-live-on-KSL.html>; Lynn Arave, “Upgrade by KSL Changes for Whom the Bell Tolls,” *Deseret Morning News*, June 17, 2005; Lynn Arave, “Nauvoo Bell’s ‘Clang’ Is Back on KSL Radio,” *Deseret News*, June 23, 2005. An earlier mention of KSL’s live broadcast, using information on a plaque posted near the bell tower is Arave, “Nauvoo Bell Chimes Live on KSL,” April 5, 2002. The errors are obvious: “The bell was salvaged from the temple as church members fled from Missouri later that year to escape persecution. The second pioneer company in the summer of 1847 managed to haul the 1,500-pound bell to Utah.”

the seven-second delay in high-definition.¹⁴⁶ After the Church History Department shared information about the bell's true identity with station management, the broadcast company quietly dropped the name from its chiming announcement of the hour. These internal changes were made without public notice. Therefore, media reports of the 2002 dedication of the rebuilt Nauvoo Temple either continued to identify the Temple Square bell as the original Nauvoo Temple bell or hedged. A *Deseret News* piece alluded to the Lamoreaux version: "Some say the Nauvoo Bell was salvaged by fleeing church members in 1846 and hauled to Utah a year later, although no one knows for sure."¹⁴⁷ Understandably, misunderstanding or uncertainty continues to the present, making our offering a needed corrective.

Shannon M. Tracy has worked in the IT world for over thirty-two years and is currently an independent contractor. He enjoys participating in historical research. Glen M. Leonard served as director of the Museum of Church History and Art (now Church History Museum) from 1979 to 2007. Ronald G. Watt, now retired, was Senior Archivist at the Church History Library. We acknowledge the contributions of Grant Allen Anderson, W. Randall Dixon, Rebecca K. Hyatt, and Darlene Hutchinson, who shared with us their research files on the Nauvoo and Hummer bells.

146. Arave, "Upgrade by KSL Changes for Whom the Bell Tolls"; Arave, "Nauvoo Bell's 'Clang' Is Back on KSL Radio."

147. For example, see Carrie A. Moore, "Nauvoo Temple: New Centerpiece Rises in the 'City Beautiful,'" *Deseret News*, May 2, 2002, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/385007058/Nauvoo-Temple.html>. Moore wrote: "The Nauvoo Temple will have its own new bell. The Nauvoo Bell, currently located in Salt Lake City's Temple Square, will stay where it is, although there was some talk of sending it to Nauvoo, [architect Roger] Jackson said."