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Romance of The Liberty Bell By New York Times Writer Tells of Trip To and Stay in This City

The romance of the Liberty Bell since its birthday in London in 1752, including its fifty-mile journey on a farmer's wagon to Allentown, where it was hidden in Zion Reformed church to protect it from the British, together with men and other events in its history are delightfully sketched in the July 1 issue of the New York Times by Chaplain Warren Patten Coon, student of colonial times.

The following is the sketch:

No relic in America is more revered than the Liberty Bell, and "its prophetic inscription; its appeal to the people to assemble for the redress of their grievances; its defiant clangour that memorable day of the Proclamation of our Independence its joyous pealing over the completed work of the American Revolution, and its last tolling over the dead of the nation, gives us its story in abiding interest to the nation and the world."

Since its birthday in London in 1752 this famous bell has traveled more than half way round the globe across the Atlantic in its initial journey, and later, as an object of veneration, has been taken from its home in Philadelphia on ten different occasions to appear at expositions and other gatherings from Boston to San Francisco and from Chicago to New Orleans. But of all these ten journeys none was of such moment and historical interest as its first pilgrimage in America, when it was hauled fifty miles on a farmer's wagon and bidden in the cellar of a church to prevent its capture by the British.

No defeat of the American Revolution was more disastrous than that of the Battle of Brandywine, Pennsylvania, September 11, 1777, when 1,000 out of Washington's 14,000 men fell. This catastrophe took place thirty-five miles, as the crow flies, west of Philadelphia. General Howe, the British commander, having lost 600 of his 18,000 men, moved on Philadelphia, causing consternation. The Continental Congress, in session there, hastily adjourned on September 18 to meet in Lancaster, a few miles west of Brandywine, and, to circumvent the victorious British, took their departure by way of Bethlehem, Allentown, Kutztown and heading, traveling on horseback fifty miles due north and thence 100 miles southwest, establishing the new capital at Lancaster on the 27th, and, three days later, took up their position at York, fifty miles west of Brandywine, where, for many months the affairs of the nation were conducted.

Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, all was astir. An immediate movement of the Continental Army, including the sick and wounded, was begun northward from French Creek and Philadelphia to Bethlehem and its vicinity. The State House, or Liberty Bell and other bells, were taken down and hurried to hiding. On Sept. 19, 1777, according to the diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer, an official of the Quartermaster's Department, the public money, books and papers were sent to the home of Abraham Hunt, in New Jersey, for temporary safekeeping. From the diary of the Moravian bishop at Bethlehem we know that on Monday, Sept. 22, the archives and other papers of Congress arrived there from Trenton by way of Eastern, under a 'convoy of fifty troopers and fifty infantrymen. On Tuesday, Sept. 23, the heavy baggage of the Continental Army began arriving at Bethlehem "in a continuous train of 700 wagons, direct from camp, under escort of 200 men, commanded by Colonel William Polk of North Carolina," and went into camp. The Liberty Bell was on one of these wagons.

At the time of the Liberty Bell's disappearance from Philadelphia, rumor was rife that its sacred and patriotic tongue had forever been silenced in a watery grave in the Delaware. Some historians have said that Congress took it to Lancaster and York, making their deductions probably, from the fact that Congress and the bell left and returned to Philadelphia almost simultaneously

Loaded Onto a Wagon

The fact was that in September, 1777, by order of the Executive Council, the State House, or Liberty Bell, the bells of Christ Church and St. Peter's Church, eleven in all, were removed to Allentown by way of Bethlehem. To the victor belong the spoils, and history furnishes instances where the bells of captured cities and towns have been melted down and recast as cannon, or run into bullets. Obviously this was the reason for the removal of the Philadelphia bells.

Under the date of Sept. 23, 1777, the following entry is found in the diary of the Bethlehem Moravian Church: "The bells from Philadelphia brought in wagons. The wagon with the State House bell broke down here, so it had to be unloaded: the other bells went on." It was transferred to another wagon, that of Frederick Leaser, a teamster in the Revolution, and, on Sept. 24, followed the others to Allentown. The Liberty Bell and the Chimes of Christ Church were there secreted beneath the floor of Zion's Reformed Church, where they remained for almost a year. This church is as old as the city of Allentown itself, dating from 1762, when a building of logs was erected on the site of the present edifice. The second church, of stone, was built in 1773, and was the one which shielded the bell. In 1838 it gave way to a new building of brick, superseded in 1886 by the present stone edifice.

Its first pastor was the Rev. J. Daniel Gross, who served from 1762 to 1770, and was followed by Rev. Abraham Blumer, who held the pastorate from 1771 to 1801. He it was who assisted in the work of concealing the bells. His son, Henry Blumer, was married to Sarah, a daughter of John Jacob Mickley, who had charge of the bells from Philadelphia to Allentown, using his farm horses and wagons. His son, John Jacob Mickley, Jr, then a boy of eleven years, rode on the wagon that conveyed the Liberty Bell, and was occasionally -permitted to drive. The description, as he gave it, of his first visit and ride to and from Philadelphia, as told to his grandchildren, is an interesting story. He died on April 1, 1857.

The entire operation of removing the bells from their towers, loading them on wagons, and removing them from Philadelphia, was accomplished under cover of darkness. The loaded farm-wagons were piled high with barnyard refuse, a piece of strategy to foil the enemy. What must have been the experience of the men who hauled this great old bell from Philadelphia to Allentown! Imagine how their hearts must have thrilled at the excitement, as they traveled along in the darkness, expectant of attack any minute. Could they foresee that the world was to witness a new era, opening wide opportunity? The shot fired at Lexington and heard around the world was not so loud nor has it re-echoed so far as the voice of liberty from the now mute lips of the grand old bell.

John Jacob Mickley, who had charge of the Liberty Bell, was born on Dec. 17, 1737, in Whitehall Town ship, Lehigh County, Pa., the sort of Jean Jacques Michelet, a Huguenot refugee of the Michelet family in Metz, Lorraine. The family fled to Deux Ponts, then a German province, whence the son left for Rotterdam, and came to America on the good ship Hope, which sailed out of London, by way of Rotterdam, for Philadelphia. On the ship his name was registered Mueckil. Arriving in Philadelphia, he took the oath of allegiance on Aug. 27, 1733, and settled in White Hall, Lehigh County, where many of his descendants still live. The name

has undergone many changes. In various deeds and other documents in the possession of his great-great-great-granddaughter, Miss Minnie F. Mickley of Washington, Pa, the name is written Michelet, Miquelet, Mueckil and Michley. It finally assumed the present form of Mickley. Michelet Chapter, D. A. R., Philadelphia, consists only of descendants of John Jacob Mickley. It was organized by Minnie F. Mickley on March 12, 1913, the organization taking place in Independence Hall.

John Jacob Mickley, the Huguenot immigrant, married Elizabeth Barbara Burghalter, whose brother, Peter Burghalter, became a Colonel In the American Revolution, and a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1776. They had four sons and three daughters. The eldest son, John Jacob Mickel 2d, with large means, aided in every way he could the cause of the Continental Army. He gave his horses and wagons for its use, and his personal assistance in secreting the bells of Philadelphia, John Martin Mickley, his brother, was a soldier in the American Revolution, and was In the battle of Germantown. John Peter Mickley, the third brother, served in the capacity of fifer, was in the (Battle of Germantown, and served during the entire period of the Revolution. The fourth brother, Henry, and his sister, Barbara, 9 and 7 years old, respectively, while hunting chestnuts near Mickleys, Pa., were scalped by the Indians on Oct. 8, 1763, the little girl surviving until the following morning.

John Jacob Mickley of Liberty Bell fame married Susanne Catherine Miller. Ten children were born to them, the eldest, John Jacob Mickley 3d, being the boy who rode on his father's wagon when it hauled the bell, and Catherine, next to the youngest child, who married Captain John Balliet of the Revolution, brother of Colonel Stephen Balliet, and son of Paulus Balliet, the Huguenot Immigrant, who also settled in White Hall Township, Lehigh (then Northampton) County, Pa.

During the period that the old bell, then young, reposed beneath the floor of a church, hymns of faith and prayers for victory resounding faintly above its resting place, the battle of Germantown, fifty miles away, was fought to a draw on Oct. 4, 1777. Three days later, at Saratoga, N. Y., a smashing victory was achieved by Arnold and Gates, when Burgoyne surrendered. On Dec. 17, Valley Forge, thirty-five miles due south of the Liberty Bell's place of hiding, became the camp of Washington and his troops, where many of those who had responded to the bell's call to arms the summer before died from exposure. When the British withdrew from Philadelphia the Liberty Bell was brought back, and, in the latter part of 1778, rehung in its former place.

"John Marshall, then chief justice of the United States, died in Philadelphia on July 6, 1935," says one account. "On July 8, exactly fifty-nine years to the day of the anniversary of the Proclamation of the Declaration of Independence to the people, his remains were borne from Philadelphia to his native state, Virginia, for burial. During the funeral solemnities the Liberty Bell, while slowly tolling, cracked through its side, forever silenced but not less eloquent in its mute patriotic appeal. It had lived out its life (82 years) of usefulness as men live out their lives. Its active work was done; it had called the people together to preserve their rights under the British crown; it had rung out its clamorous defiance on the great day 'of the Proclamation of the Declaration of their Independence; it had glorified all anniversaries of that Independence. Henceforth, it remains in its ancient place, the silent symbol- of not only 'Liberty throughout all the land' but throughout the world."