

About the First Church Bell

The Church Bell Rings

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During the summer of 1852 the Presbyterian society of Baraboo, were desirous of purchasing a bell, to be attached to their church edifice. They were also anxious to obtain it in time to ring a salute on the morning of the Nation's birthday. With some assistance the enterprise was successful and a fine toned church bell was the result of their efforts. The bell was purchased by D. K. Noyes while on his way to his old home in Vermont. He paid \$130.50 plus \$5.50 transportation to Milwaukee.

There was no time to build a belfry, so a frame was erected outside of the church and the bell was placed in position ready for service. Early on the morning of the Fourth, Elder Kasson, the pastor, with Deacons Clark and Warner, and a number of others were on the grounds.

Elder Thompson, pastor of the M. E. church, an expert drummer, was there with his drum.

After the sun rose over the Eastern hills, after a few remarks by the ministers present, the new bell turned out peal after peal, the martial music joining in the salute. Together they rang in the reveille of Independence Day.

At the same hour on the public square, the pine-tree flag of the colonies, was run up the tall flag staff, while from a number of buildings, the Nation's flag was waving in the morning breeze, for Baraboo had decided upon an old-fashioned celebration, and no effort was spared to insure its success.

Later in the day people came in from all directions, some of them coming several miles with ox teams. At the appointed hour, a procession was formed, headed by the martial music, and marched around the public square, and as the writer kept time to the music he little thought that a few years later he would be carrying a Springfield rifle and marching to the same patriotic airs, "Away Down South in Dixie," nor that after more than three score and ten, the milestones of life had glided past, he would feel inspired to write a brief history of these events over half a century ago.

Arriving at the stand, the exercises as arranged for the occasion were carried out. The orator of the day, Mr. Nelson Wheeler, in a stirring speech carried his audience back to the stormy days of the Revolution with such trying events as Bunker's Hill and Valley Forge.

At it's conclusion all joined in singing "My Country Tis of Thee."

After which, the long table that had been erected for the occasion was spread with an abundance of good wholesome dishes to which all had contributed with a share.

Prominent among them, was the famous "New England" pork and beans, always quoted, "firm and in good demand," upon such occasions. A score of young ladies dressed in white, waited upon the company, and served tea, coffee or lemonade till all were supplied.

The afternoon was given up to social enjoyment, the young people engaging in various games, while the older ones sat in groups, relating incidents of their pioneer experiences, until the lengthening shadows warned them of the approach of evening. And when at the close of the day the drum beat the "tattoo," and the new church bell rang out its farewell chimes, all felt that the day had been a most successful one, not alone on account of its interesting exercises and ample festivities, but also by reason of the genuine good feeling that had characterized all its proceedings.

Probably there are not many living who were present on that occasion, but should there be some perhaps this short and rather imperfect sketch, may awaken in their memories some recollections of one of these events that always form a souvenir in life's experience.