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The Community Page

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DOES ANYONE KNOW...

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BELL?



Photo courtesy of
The Museum of Idaho.

To date, we have not been able to find out what happened to the original bell at the New Sweden School. As the school is finalizing its historic restoration, organizers are looking high and low for the original bell that hung in the tower. Supporters are still hopeful that the original bell can be located and purchased from its current owner.

If you have information that might help us locate the original bell, please call (208) 528-2011 or (208) 313-2679.

Nostalgia

The New Sweden School bell was an important part of the original building. Former New Sweden School students remember the school tradition of earning the privilege of ringing the bell by scoring well on a test. The restoration would not seem quite complete without the original bell.

We have reason to believe the New Sweden School bell has been preserved. Antique school bells are seldom simply thrown away. We believe that the bell still exists somewhere. And we hope we might be able to purchase it from its current owner. If the original bell cannot be located, an antique school bell that was purchased from the Cross Country antique store approximately 15 years ago will be installed in the bell tower. It would also be helpful if anyone knew the history of this alternate bell. It is possible that this bell is actually the original New Sweden School bell, but that would be an unlikely coincidence.

The Mystery of the Bell

In May of 1979, the New Sweden School capped off over 50 years of instruction by ending its academic season for the last time. The school's PTO threw an alumni picnic to commemorate the event with a lunch, folk dancing, and an auction of school furniture and supplies. What isn't known is whether the original school bell was among those items sold. Old photos show the bell tower on the roof of the school, and many members of the community remember that the bell played an important role at the school. But where the bell went has yet to be discovered. Was it sold to the highest bidder, lost in storage, or discarded?

From the History Books

Ever since Swedish immigrants settled the land in the late 1800s, education has been an important part of the New Sweden community. The New Sweden School, built in 1927, was actually the area's second schoolhouse, replacing one that had served the community for over 30 years. Many older residents of the New Sweden and Osgood communities tell stories of riding on horseback to the New Sweden School during the first half of the century. Others were transported by their parents via horse and buggy. Share your stories about the New Sweden School on its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NewSwedenSchool or call Tony Lima at (208) 313-2679.

Back to School

With the excitement for the start of a new year, 250 children are getting ready to embark on a historic new beginning. After several years of preparation and renovation, the New Sweden Schoolhouse is opening its doors for the first time in almost 35 years as the new American Heritage Charter School in District 91.



OPEN HOUSE Thursday, August 29 5-9 p.m.

On September 20, 1927, the community of New Sweden celebrated the opening of their new school building with addresses by religious leaders, architects, and contractors, and with various musical numbers from "America the Beautiful" to an accordion duet, and finished the evening with ice cream and cake in the school's basement.

In keeping with this tradition almost 86 years after the first celebration, the American Heritage Charter School invites the public to enjoy ice cream and cake at an open house on Thursday, August 29, 2013 from 5-9 p.m. Much of the old school has been preserved. Tour the refurbished school and support the students by participating in the silent auction. Join the community for a special capstone ceremony where a bell (hopefully the original) will be hung once again in the old bell tower. Members of the community will also have the option to buy some of the original windows and chalkboards and other mementos recovered during the school's renovation.