

FAMOUS 200 YEAR OLD CLOCK NOW BEING RESTORED

By EARNEST E. EELLS

The Fiftieth Anniversary of the East Hampton Star happens to be the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the installation of the Town Clock. Both have the element of public notice and so at this time it might be well to recall some of the interesting facts about the Bells and Clocks of East Hampton.

The first bell was a gift from Queen Ann of England, probably out of a fund called "Queen Ann's Bounty," (still existant) which was confiscated by Henry the VIII, and returned by Queen Ann. Out of this fund bells were sent to many churches in America and one came to East Hampton when the second church building was constructed in 1717. It was noted for its sweet sounding tone, and could be heard far out on the ocean when the wind was favorable.

Clock works and a clock dial with one hand, marking the hours only, were installed in 1735, 200 years ago. This "Timepiece," as it was called is now in the hands of Ross Fanning, jeweler, who intends to put it in running condition. The dial is in Clinton Academy. Historians record that the clock works, dial, and bell were taken from East Hampton and put in the museum of the Long Island Historical Society in Brooklyn. This year the dial and clock works were returned to East Hampton Historical Society but no trace of the bell could be found. The dial and clock works were found in the rubbish that had accumulated in the old fire-scorched building that was the original Plymouth Church. It had been in their keeping along with other relics connected with the Beechers.

The story of the old church bell is no more interesting than the story of the original bell on Clinton Academy. During the Revolution all the bells in New York City were confiscated for fear the British would use them for cannon. They were taken to Carlisle, Pa., to be melted down for the American Artillery, but so many cannon were captured at the Battle of Saratoga that this was not necessary, and after the war congress granted the request of New York for their return. Out of this collection of returned bells, Governor George Clinton donated the original bell for Clinton Academy. This bell has also disappeared.

One other East Hampton bell is of historic interest. The bell from the ship "John Milton." The tragic wreck of this ship is recorded on the monument over the grave of its crew in the South End Cemetery. The oration of Rev. Stephen Mershon, given at the memorial service of the Pilot's Association of Long Island, is one of the most moving ever delivered in East Hampton. The little ship's bell hangs in the Session House steeple and when rung, seems to say, "John-Mil-ton, John-Mil-ton." This bell was purchased and given by Jas. Madison Hunting, who gave the land on which the church now stands.

The clock in the present church tower was the hand work of Byram of Sag Harbor, the maker of many famous clocks. It was intended to serve in the Sag Harbor Presbyterian Church tower but never gave satisfaction there for that beautiful tower sways too much. In our tower it keeps accurate time.

The bell in the chapel in The Springs was the gift of Captain Sineus M. Edwards, who brought it over from New London on his schooner, in 1882, the year the chapel was dedicated.