

The Liberty Bell Comes to Columbus

The summer of 1915, with much controversy, the Liberty Bell was loaded on to a Pennsylvania railroad flat car and taken on a tour of the country. The trip took the special train from Philadelphia to San Francisco and, via another route, back to Philadelphia. On the return trip the train stopped at Columbus the subject of the following Columbus Dispatch article.



The Liberty Bell loaded on its special train ready to leave Philadelphia for its tour of the country. The Pennsylvania Railroad was responsible for coordinating the trip and the safety of the historic old bell.

And now you can read about the Liberty Bell's visit to Columbus.

BELL COMES LATE; CROWD GREET'S IT

Although Relic Fails to Arrive Until Midnight,
Enthusiasm of 3000 Persons Is Marked.

Formal Ceremonies Called Off;
Music's Charm Serves to Hold the People

Columbus Evening Dispatch, November 23, 1915 – It was 12:05 this morning when a hoarse roar from the throats of several thousand persons assembled just south of the Union Station pierced the night air and announced the arrival of the liberty bell.

Most of them had stood in pneumonia-breeding weather since 8 p.m. It was 12:40 when everyone bared his head to the wintry breezes as the band from the barracks played "The Star Spangled Banner," the long line of open-order soldiers formed into close file. Governor Willis, Congressman Brumbaugh, Postmaster Kinnear, Mayor Karb and others took their way home, and the reception to the bell was over. There had been no speeches.

It was estimated that something like 3000 persons gazed upon the revered and historic bronze.

Crowd Is Enthusiastic.

The extreme lateness of the night hour, while it decreased the numbers, in no wise checked the enthusiasm of those who remained. They were hurried, four and five abreast, past the car, which was switched on a spur track in Naghten Street. The entire yard was given over to sightseers.

Men, women and children were packed solid in Naghten Street from High Street to the second alley east of High, were lined along several spurs almost to the depot and were gathered on all the freight cars standing in sight of the place at which the bell was to stop. Senator Penrose of Pennsylvania, who is with the committee in charge of the bell, said that this condition was repeated everywhere in Ohio and was primarily responsible for the badly – delayed arrival. The bell was due here at 9:21 p.m.

Governor Willis joined the party in Cincinnati in the morning, and estimated that 100,000 persons had passed before the bell during the day.

Long before the expected hour it was known that the bell would be late, but this information did not penetrate the crowd to any extent. They had begun to gather shortly after 7 o'clock and an hour later the throng was large and growing rapidly. Two flat cars, lashed together side by side, had been fitted with seats for the band and speakers, if the expected

program had been carried out. A veteran of the Spanish-American war, without uniform and without orders, managed to keep the place clear. Nowhere else were there seats.

Music Keeps Crowd.

By 9:30 the crowd began to get restive. At 10 o'clock Robert O'Brien of the Chamber of Commerce arrived with a megaphone and called out the train was an hour and 45 minutes late.

"I don't care if it is midnight, I got to see that bell," one urchin cried, and that sentiment seemed to pervade the assemblage. Many left, but many more remained and the crowd waxed and waned all through the weary waiting.

The Republican Glee Club, which was to furnish the music, arrived at 10 o'clock and sang several songs and departed. A little later a volunteer drum corps, made up of youngsters, created a diversion. While there was music very few would leave. At 10:45 the barracks band and four companies of soldiers arrived. That decided it with the crowd. They settle down to wait, no matter what the hour. Many men left for a season to refresh the inner man and returned the better prepared to resist the penetrating winds which searched out every crevice and seam in a person's apparel.

The soldiers stretched themselves in long lines on either side of the tack where the bell was to be and up and down the street. Then the soldiers waited. Everybody waited.

Several organizations, like the Knights of Columbus, had come down in a body at an early hour, but these organizations lost their cohesion, and, if they remained, it was as individuals. Only the soldiery maintained its discipline and form. Men stamped their feet women waived their arms. Those who had [??] of vantage did not yield them, despite the wind and the cold.

At last the train backed in. Ever and ever so carefully the car was let into its berth. Tired and red-eyed members of the party clambered out onto the special car which carries the bell, a large flat car electrically lighted and with a canopy over the bell. It had been decided by common consent to eliminate all speeches.

In addition to the governor and Adjutant General Hough a special committee traveled from Xenia by invitation of Congressman Brumbaugh. These were Mayer Karb,

The April, 2017, *Smithsonian Magazine* has an article about the Liberty Bell tour. You can see this at –

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-liberty-bell-won-great-war-180962471/>