

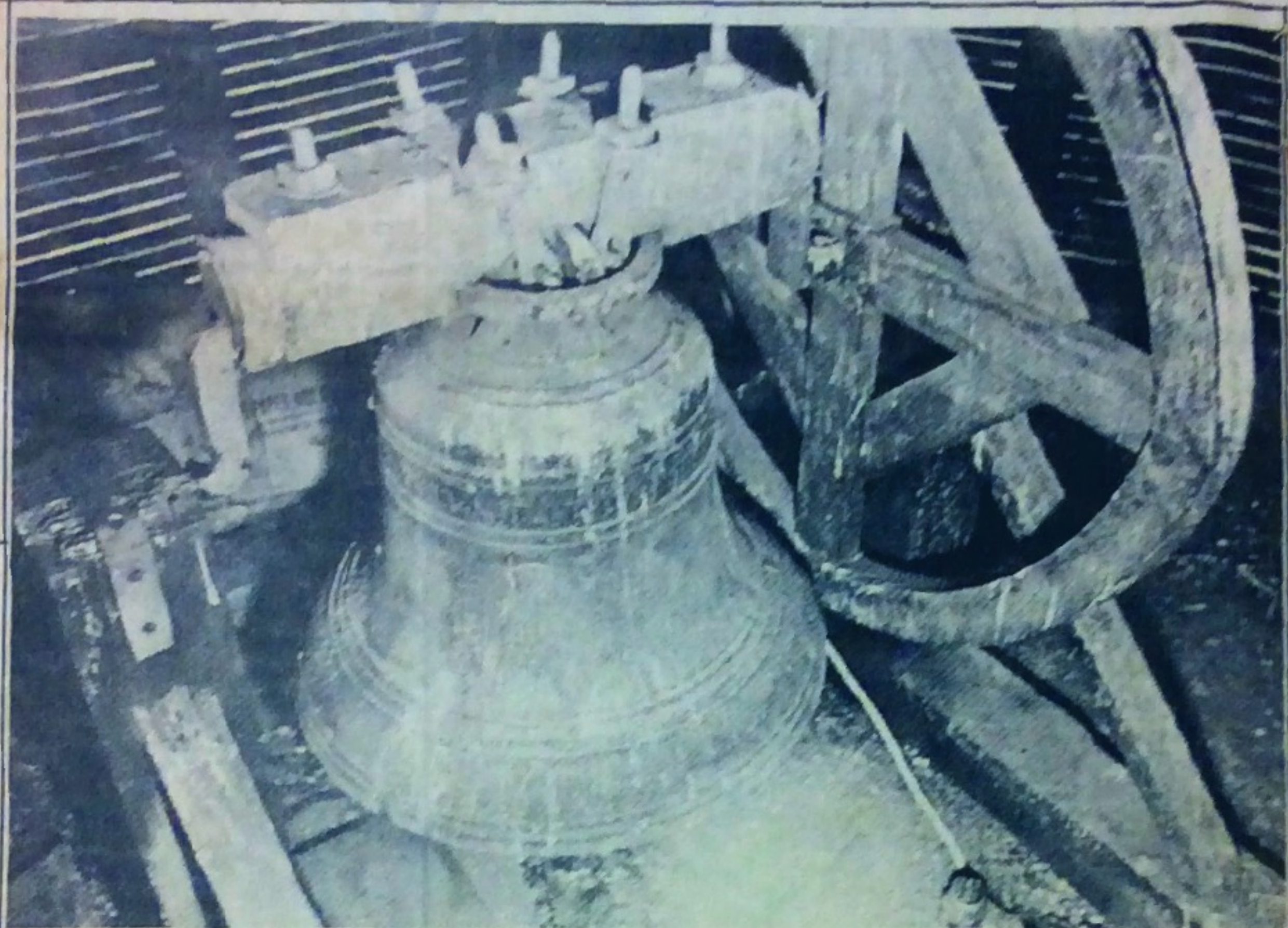
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Shenandoah Valley's Outstanding Newspaper

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THE HISTORIC WOODSTOCK COURTHOUSE BELL

### Story Of Courthouse Bell Filled With Antiquity And Local History

The story of the old Woodstock Courthouse bell is one filled with much antiquity and more than its share of local history, dating from the late 18th century.

Last week representatives of the Shenandoah County Bicentennial Committee climbed into the loft of the courthouse for pictures of and information from this belfry which was constructed at the time the courthouse was built in 1795. Timbers for the bell and belfry were raised during the building construction.

Lying on and attached to the ceiling joists are two hand-hewn yellow pine sills which measure nine by 14 inches and are 27 feet long. Placed eight feet apart with four timbers of the same size morticed into them as added framework, ceiling joists support this structure with hand-wrought  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch bolts with slots cut into them for iron wedges which can be driven tighter in case of loosening.

Morticed into this framework are seven by seven inch timbers which are attached with wooden pins.

The top of the belfry is hexagon-shaped and the fitting of the rafters was done by the finest of carpenters. All of this roof framework is attached through the seven by seven timbers with a center piece with a wooden wedge which can be driven tighter in case of wind vibration.

Supporting the bell is a yoke similar to the one that holds the Liberty Bell with again, hand wrought stirrups carrying the bell's heavy weight.

Cast into the bell near the top is the following inscription: "Geo. Hadderly Founder Phila. 1809." One would suppose from this date that the bell was placed 14 years after the courthouse was built.

The supporting posts inside are covered with initials, and dates, the earliest one being 1817. The bell was used to call all meetings and fires and to assemble people at the courthouse.