

Kids Corner - Sally the Ship Bell

It was a crisp winter day, and the children were out of school in Belleville. The children had decided to go down along the river and walk along the edge and see what the ice brought up to the shore. The children were walking and kicking cans and laughing and playing. When all of a sudden Charles looked down and saw something sticking up through the mud. He began to dig and dig, what was it...he had found a bell that was dirty and heavy and about the size of a ball of rope his dad had in the barn. The children gathered around and wondered where this bell could have come from.

Laura, the oldest of the group, said maybe the librarian could be helpful. Off the children raced to the library near the center of the town of Belleville next to Toby the town Bell. As they raced to the library, the bell was tingling softly as their quick steps jiggled the clapper in the bell. Soon the children were rushing into the library calling for Mrs. Barnes to help them. She looked up with surprise and asked how she could help. The children joyfully asked, how the bell got to the river, what was it used for, and why did it have the name Sally on the inside on the side of the bell.

The children were all asking and excited with very loud voices. Mrs. Barnes said, "Children please settle down and let's see if we can solve this mystery." She took the bell in her hands and looked carefully around all the sides and inside the bell she found a date along with the inscription of Sally. Mrs. Barnes explained that the only bell that she had heard of having a name was a ship's bell. She explained the name of the boat is how they could tell many of the boats in the harbor apart.

She went on to say she to the children that a ship's bell was very important for many reasons;

1. to alert other ships of their location when their weather was foggy.
2. used as a way of keeping time on the ship.

Charles asked if Miss Barnes could explain how a bell could keep time. She smiled and said there were young men on the job to keep a watch on a sand timer and ring the bell as the hours passed. Charles looked excited at that idea of being a member of a ship's crew. Mrs. Barnes smiled at him and said, "he would make a fine seaman one day." The children thanked Mrs. Barnes and rushed outside together. Charles waved goodbye to his friends as he carefully went home with his new treasure Sally, the ship's bell.