

The Lost Bible

by Lynne Belluscio

On March 16th I received an e-mail from Lou Maloof in Old Chatham, Massachusetts. He had “the” LeRoy Bible and wanted to return it to the LeRoy family.

He later sent me a couple of photographs of a handwritten page which indicated that the Bible had indeed belonged to Herman LeRoy. On one page, is written: “Herman LeRoy 1800 cost 30 dollars.”

The Bible was published in 1795 by the “late W. Heptenstall and sold by the proprietor T. Hepinstall No 31 Fleet St. sold by John Creswich & Co.” A very small sticker in the front mentions that the book was bound by M. Kenlay at No 8 Bow Street Covent Gardens (in England). I suspect that the Bible was imported and sold to Herman in New York City.

I e-mailed Newbold LeRoy, who is Herman LeRoy’s Great, Great, Great Grandson and told him about the Bible and he immediately contacted Mr. Maloof. They made arrangements to meet over Easter in Rochester, New Hampshire. Newbold discovered that when Lou’s brother, Dan died, Lou inherited a huge collection of antiques, including the Bible. Lou figures that Dan had found the Bible at a yard sale or antique sale in Newport. And Newbold and I figure that the Bible made its way to Newport with Daniel LeRoy, Herman’s son. (Daniel is Jacob’s younger brother.)



Daniel married Suzanna Fish, who was from a wealthy family in Newport. Daniel died in 1885 and eventually the Bible passed out of the LeRoy family and was sold. Fortunately, Mr. Maloof contacted us and we were able to put him in contact with the LeRoy family and the story has a happy ending.

After Newbold received the Bible he contacted me and said

that he would like us to see it, although the family had decided to keep it – as well they should. While we were talking, I told Newbold about the upcoming Bicentennial event and invited

him to come. He already had another event on his schedule, and was very sorry he could not attend. And then I asked, “Wouldn’t it be neat if you could send the Bible for the Bicentennial and the Supervisor could take his oath of office on Herman LeRoy’s Bible. It’s only fitting since the town is named for Herman LeRoy.”

So that’s what happened. About a week before the Bicentennial, a large box arrived and inside, wrapped with a bright red ribbon – to keep the covers from falling off – lay the Bible.

It was taken over to the Auditorium shortly before the event and Steve Barbeau’s wife Doris, held the heavy book while Steve took the oath of office. The photograph made the front page of the *Batavia Daily*. You all know, that the impending storm threatened us with a downpour, and not only was I concerned about getting people inside the auditorium if the heavens opened up, but I needed to make sure the Bible was safe. Luckily, the rain did not appear, and the Bible was safe. It is now safely on its way back to the LeRoy family, wrapped in acid free paper and protected for another 200 years.

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