

# Old Church Bell To Continue Ringing

By PAUL McCLUNG

THE 65-year-old bell at Comanche Reformed Church in northeast Lawton will be dedicated on a new stone pedestal this afternoon.

The program will be at 2:30 p.m. today in front of the stone church, located west of U.S. 277 and the Lawton Indian Hospital.

The bell was removed recently from the church belfry because of danger of its falling. The congregation mounted it on a wishing well-type base in front of the church building. Stone in the pedestal matches the stone in the church building.

Today's 30-minute program will include unveiling of the bell and a bronze historical plaque, Indian songs and prayers, and a resume of the history of the church. The

dedication will be inside the church in case of inclement weather.

Rev. Robert B. Choat, long-time minister at the church, will give the resume. With Col. (Ret.) Wilbur Burgess, president of the Institute of the Great Plains, and Gillett Griswold, director of the Fort Sill Museum, Rev. Choat will unveil the bell and a bronze historic plaque.

The bronze marker will be a memorial to Rev. Choat and other ministers and missionaries who served the church. Rev. Choat retired recently but still is supply pastor.

The project was a joint effort of the church congregation and the Institute of the Great Plains.

The bell was especially cast in Troy, N.Y. for the

church. It was brought here in the Spring of 1906 and hung in the first church building at the site. In 1941, it was placed in the belfry of the present building, said Rev. Choat.

On one side of the big bell is the raised, cast inscription, "Meneley Bell Co. Troy, N. Y."

Marked in raised, cast letters on the other side is the inscription:

"Comanche Reformed Church

"Vermilija Memorial)

"Presented by Mrs.

Charles A. Runk

"New York, 1906

"'Unto Thee O Lord Will I Sing.'"

Mrs. Runk was president of the women's board of domestic missions of the Re-

## OLD CHURCH

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formed Church in America.  
Her maiden name was **ver-**  
milye.

The inscription for the cast  
bronze plaque to be mount-  
ed on the church bell pedes-  
tal is:

"Comanche Reformed  
Church

"This bell was especially  
cast for the Comanche Re-  
formed Church when the  
church was completed in 1906.  
The bell was used during the  
ministries of Rev. L. L. Leg-  
ters, first missionary, and his  
successors, Revs. H. Slyter,  
J. Dykema, R. H. Harper,  
J. L. Rard, and R. P. Chaat.

"Rev. Robert Chaat of the  
Comanche Indian Tribe began  
his ministry of the Comanche  
Reformed Church in 1925, and  
devotedly served his people in  
this capacity through the year  
1970. During his long tenure  
the bell rang out for serv-  
ices, funerals, weddings, and  
countless other joyous and sad  
occasions.

"In keeping with its histor-  
ical and sacred associations,  
this bell is here preserved  
through the efforts of the  
church congregation and the  
Institute of the Great Plains.

"Installed and Dedicated,  
May 30, 1971."

Rev. Chaat said members  
of the congregation expect to  
continue ringing the bell to  
signal beginnings of services  
and other occasions, as they  
have done since it arrived in  
Lawton.

Transcription

## Old Church Bell To Continue Ringing

By Paul McClung

The 65 year-old bell at Comanche Reformed Church in north east Lawton will be dedicated on a new stone pedestal this afternoon.

The program will be at 2:30 p.m. today in front of the stone church located west of U.S. 277 and the Lawton Indian Hospital.

The bell was removed recently from the church belfry because of danger of its falling. The congregation mounted it on a wishing well-type base in front of the church building. Stone in the pedestal matches the stone in the church building.

Today's 30-minute program will include unveiling of the bell and a bronze historical plaque, Indian songs and prayers, and a resume of the history of the church. The dedication will be inside the church in case of inclement weather.

Rev. Robert B. Chaat, longtime minister at the church, will give the resume. With Col. (Ret.) Wilbur Burgess, president of the Institute of the Great Plains, and Gillett Griswold, director of the Fort Sill Museum. Rev. Chaat will unveil the bell and a bronze historic plaque.

The bronze marker will be a memorial to Rev. Chaat and other ministers and missionaries who served the church. Rev. Chaat retired recently but still is supply pastor.

The project was a joint effort of the church congregation and the Institute of the Great Plains.

The bell was especially cast in Troy, N.Y. for the church. It was brought here in the Spring of 1905 and hung in the first church building at the site. In 1941 it was placed in the belfry of the present building, said Rev. Chaat.

On one side of the big bell is the raised, cast inscription.

“Menely Bell Co.\*

Troy, N.Y.”

Marked in raised cast letters on the other side is the inscription:

“Comanche Reformed Church

Vermilye Memorial

Presented by Mrs. Charles A. Ruck

New York, 1905

Unto Thee O Lord Will I Sing”

Mrs. Ruck was president of the Women’s board of domestic missions of the Reformed Church in America. Her maiden name was Vermilye\*.

The inscription for the cast bronze plaque to be mounted on the church bell pedestal is:

“Comanche Reformed Church

This bell was especially cast for the Comanche Reformed Church when the church was completed in 1905. The bell was used during the ministries of Rev. L. L. Legters, first missionary, and his successors, Revs. H. Slyter, J. Dykema, R. H. Harper, J. L. Read, and R. P. Chaat.

Rev. Robert Chaat of the Comanche Indian Tribe began his ministry of the Comanche Reformed Church in 1925, and devotedly served his people in this capacity through the year 1976. During his long tenure the bell rang out for services, funerals, weddings and countless other joyous and sad occasions.

In keeping with its historical and sacred associations, this bell is here preserved through the efforts of the church congregation and the Institute of the Great Plains.

Installed and Dedicated, May 30, 1971”

Rev. Chaat said members of the congregation expect to continue ringing the bell to signal beginnings of services and other occasions as they have done since it arrived in Lawton.

Published in The Lawton Constitution And Morning Press, Lawton, Oklahoma, May 30, 1971.

\* The identity of Mrs. Ruck is unknown

\*This is the Meneely Bell Co., of Troy, New York, (1871-1951). For more information, images and history of this company go to [Meneely Bell Foundries \(danmeneely.com\)](http://danmeneely.com)