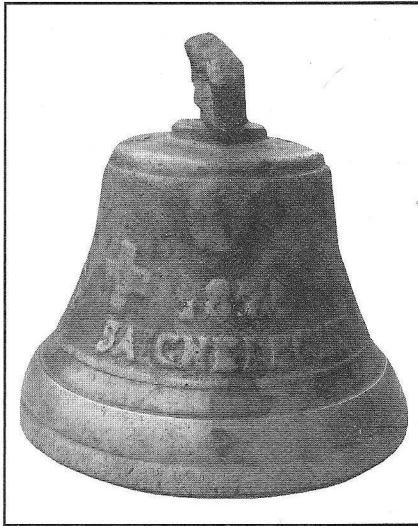


DEAD RINGER



Q. What is the story behind this "1878 Saignélegier Chiantel Fondeur" bell? It is cast brass with an iron loop or handle, and the clapper is missing. I believe there is a story about some Swiss gold miners in Utah, who had bells like these on their pack horses or mules.

A. Since it's been published elsewhere, I won't comment on the treasure tale. As for the bells themselves, we're indebted to **Chuck Kelly** and his wife **DeeAnna Weed** of **Classic Bells** for the following information from their excellent website— www.classicbells.com— where DeeAnna writes:

"These open-mouth bells, often found on the collectibles market in eight sizes ranging from 2-3/4" to 6" in diameter, are sometimes called Swiss cow bells. I have not found any reputable bell historian who can provide an accurate history of the Saignélegier bell design. Because of this, I am extremely skeptical of the many fanciful

stories told about its origins. What I do know for certain is that Bevin Bros. Mfg. Co. of East Hampton, Connecticut has made these bells for many decades. According to a Bevin sales brochure, "These Swiss cow and sheep bell reproductions are hand cast from mold patterns found in the Bevin Bros. factory almost 100 years ago. Each bell is cast from bronze in the pattern of the famous 1878 Saignélegier bell, which, legend tells, comes from the town of the same name." Swiss cow bells that are genuinely old cannot easily be distinguished from new ones, especially since many new bells have been artificially antiqued. I value these bells at the retail price for new Saignélegier bells, which ranges in the Bevins catalog from \$17.50 to \$54, depending on size." □

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