



A Surprising Auction Find

by Dave Coatsworth

A fellow NAWCC member recently sent me an e-mail regarding an item in the October 2008 Tom Harris auction that he thought might be of interest to me. Upon clicking the link contained in the e-mail, I was surprised to see a private label Elgin pocket watch with the name "J. W. Coatsworth & Co." printed on the dial. Given the relative rarity of the Coatsworth name, I never expected to see the name on a watch. This was a watch that I had to have in my collection!

I placed an absentee bid for quite a bit more than the "book" value of the watch and waited for auction day. When that day arrived, I tracked the auction through the Live Auctioneers website. When lot 738 finally came up, I watched as the bidding climbed toward my absentee bid limit. I was not the only one who really wanted this watch! I gave a sigh of relief when the hammer fell just below my bid limit. I had won the watch! Now to wait for it to be delivered.



I received the watch some two weeks later and held it in my hand for the first time. The movement is an Elgin 18 size, 15 jewel, grade 217, hunting case movement. The serial number 8511501 places manufacture in 1899. The dial is a fancy glass dial with the full inscription reading "J. W. Coatsworth & Co., Galena, Ills., Jewelers". The movement is also engraved "J. W. Coatsworth & Co. Galena, Ills.". It is housed in a 20-year, gold filled, B&B Royal hunting case, which, unfortunately, appears to be a recase. Overall, the watch is in very good, running condition.



I have since discovered that Joseph Walton Coatsworth was a third generation jeweler in Galena, Illinois. His grandfather, Joseph Coatsworth, started a jewelry business in Pottsville, Pennsylvania upon arriving in the United States in 1830. In 1850, he moved his family to Galena, where he continued the business in a shop located on Main Street. In 1854 he purchased a vacant lot, also located on Main Street, from D. A. Barrows. Joseph Coatsworth constructed a four story

building, which included shops on the ground floor, on this site in 1856. 'Joseph Coatsworth & Son, Practical Clock and Watchmakers' continued their business in one of these ground floor shops. (The advertisement below is from the 1854/5 Galena City Directory.) In 1858, Joseph Coatsworth leased another one of the ground floor shops, the cellar and the entire 3rd floor of the building to J. R. Grant, father of Ulysses S. Grant, which he was to use for his leather goods business. Ulysses S. Grant worked with his father in this shop for about a year just prior to the start of the Civil War. J. R. Grant left this building and moved to 173 Main Street in 1864.

The photo (Right) was reportedly taken sometime in the 1870's, shows the building and the "J. Coatsworth & Son" storefront. (Note the large soaring eagle with a pocket watch in its beak hanging over the sidewalk.) The timing of the turnover of the business from father to son to grandson is unclear. Joseph's son was James, who could have been the J. Coatsworth at the time this photo was taken. He died in 1890. James' son was Joseph Walton Coatsworth, the 'J. W. Coatsworth' on this watch. The reported existence (in John Fogarty's database of Elgin private labels) of an Elgin from "J. W. Coatsworth & Son" marked simply J. W. Coatsworth (18s, grade 10, serial number 1230823) was probably produced while James was the owner and Joseph Walton was the Son, although this is not a certainty. Joseph Walton Coatsworth had four children, one boy and three girls, but there is no indication that any of them continued this family jewelry business.



The Barrows-Coatsworth building still stands today as an Illinois State Historic Site. It was rebuilt in the 1970's due to disrepair and fire but the original look was preserved. The ground floor is now a center for senior citizens, the upper floors providing low cost apartments for the elderly.

Joseph Walton Coatsworth is a very distant relative, with our first common ancestor being six generations back. Despite this distance, finding this watch and learning more about this branch of the Coatsworth family has been a very rewarding experience. I would be very interested in hearing of any other Coatsworth private label watches or any additional information regarding these three generations of Galena, Illinois jewelers.

[Some of the historical information contained in this article, as well as the building photo, was obtained from the Historical American Building Survey (HABS No. IL-1112). The Coatsworth family information is from The Descendants of Thomas Coatsworth and Mary Bainbridge, by Eva M. Coatsworth.]

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

By Mike Schmidt

Happy Holidays to All

This time of the year is one of reflecting and giving thanks. The support, sharing and goodwill from all the Chapter 190 members and friends has been truly inspirational.

To recap some of this years highlights, we had our first Annual Mart, four Field Suitcase Classes, ten Chapter meetings with terrific programs and workshops, produced a professional outstanding newsletter with interesting membership written articles, and our website is tops with new features added on a continuous basis.

As we close out this second year with the last newsletter and meeting, I want to thank the Officers and Directors, newsletter contributors, program presenters, workshop leaders, committee members, and all the 96 chapter members who pitched in to make this another great year for Chapter 190.

Education- Chapter 190 Opportunities:

The next class to be offered is the FSW 202 "Advanced Lathe Class". This class is scheduled for

January 9-12, 2009. The coordinator for this class will be Paul Skeels, 805 525 7325- Email plskeelsatty@verizon.net.

A 2 day class is offered. The FSW 501 "The Repair and Replacement of an American Strip Recoil Escapement". (Prerequisite F101) This class will be offered for Feb. 9-10. The coordinator for this class is Mike Schmidt, 805 988 1764- Email eaglecreekclocks@msn.com

Congratulations to all the students who have recently completed the FSW 301 watch repair Class with instructor Ferdinand Geitner. Students John Berney, David Clarkin, Glen Webb, Lex Rooker, Joshua Clark, Ray Marsolek, Hugh Platt, Steven Schecter, John Tope and coordinator Laurie Conti.

Rescheduled Workshop- A one day presentation and workshop, "DENTAL TECHNIQUES USED IN CLOCK CASE REPAIR", will be held Saturday January 17th from 10:00 AM -5:00 PM, and will be presented by Laurie Conti, 805 813 2216 -Email: Remember_The_Clock@mac.com.

The workshop will be held at the Historic Dudley House in Ventura. Contact Laurie soon, as this workshop is almost full.

TIP- If your spouse is trying to think of a holiday gift. A Tran Duy Ly clock book or books might fill the need. Ken McWilliams can help you with a very nice discount with a combined membership order.

TIP- A new and interesting product "The Loupe with Light". Amazing loupe with built-in UV light. Check it out bramsopfalmssprings.com. Dennis Contreas 760-347 2629-Email oldtimeetc@aol.com of Chapter 75 offers a discount

Remember, you never know when or what you are looking for, or not looking for, will appear at a Mart. Bring Clocks, watches, parts and tools, sell or trade at the Mart.

The program for Sunday November 16th at 1:30 will be "Tumbling, Polishing and Cleaning Clock Parts" The program will be presented by Ray Marsolek. Ray has been a member of NAWCC since 1975. He has taught at the School of Horology, and is presently a Field Suitcase instructor.

The show & Tell for November will be "Your first watch or clock". What inspired your interest? Any clock watch or horological item and a good story are always welcome for Show & Tell. Prizes for the best.

See you all at the meeting

Mike



FACES SEEN AT THE OCTOBER MEETING



Tales From the Bench

by Ferdinand Geitner

Does your clock need a Dentist?

I'm referring, of course, to the teeth on the wheels and pinions which don't always get the attention they deserve.

On older (100 - 200 years) clocks one sometimes finds wear on the pinions, especially if someone oiled the wheels and pinions which turns into a grinding paste. A nice little step is ground into the steel tooth.



Sometimes it is barely noticeable but more often the teeth are almost half worn away. It's a perfect convex curve.

The interesting fact is that the harder steel pinion wears more than the softer brass wheel. The explanation is that particles of steel from the wear on the pinion embed themselves into the softer brass and act like a grinding wheel. So the pinion is actually wearing itself away.

The next problem presents itself when the clock gets cleaned and the worn holes are fitted with new bushings, the pivots are perfectly polished, the clock is reassembled, oiled and placed on the test stand. Within minutes it stops running.



The clock had worn nice small (not always noticeable) steps into the pinion which fit the shape of the tooth engaging with the pinion and moves with wear in the holes (bushings). By installing new bushes which fit the pivots more precisely it changes the depth and brings the teeth of the wheel closer to the pinion therefore the previously perfectly fitting (worn) curves now JAM on each other.

The frustrated restorer has polished the pivots, bushed the holes perfectly, polished the pallets and aligned the escapement. Yet the silly clock won't work.

Depending on the historic value of the clock and on the Repairer (Restorer/Conservator) the approach of restoration changes.

A "Museum Conservator" cannot replace the pinion. He has to keep the parts as original as possible. There are very expensive tools available which can deposit metal on a very precise microscopic level. One can build up the worn sections and make the teeth as good as new. The average repairer with an average clock cannot afford such procedures and would most likely have to replace the pinion or move the wheel along it's shaft to an unworn section of the pinion. ■

**The next Meeting & Mart for Chapter 190
is November 16, 2008**

Sellers may start setting up at 11:30

The Mart is open from 12:00 til 1:15

The Meeting starts at 1:15

PROGRAM

"Tumbling, Polishing and Cleaning Clock Parts"

Presented by Ray Marsolek

*Tumbling is an interesting approach to cleaning
and polishing clock parts and plates.*

*The method can be applied to other items as well
Come to Ray's program & learn how it's done*

SHOW & TELL

"Your first watch or clock"

Prize for the best clock/watch & story.

Welcome New Members

Gilbert & Cathy Gillogy



Collecting The "Non-collectibles"

by Henri Bonet

Collecting vintage wristwatches these days is certainly not what it used to be. To begin with, the likelihood of the average collector finding a vintage timepiece in a reasonably decent condition is extremely remote. Like countless other collectors, I have over the years, accumulated more than my fair share of junk. These are watches acquired at shows or on line, that are in such poor internal condition as to be beyond repair. These days, I no longer buy anything on line, and seldom do I acquire timepieces at trade shows. It would appear that the inventory of decent vintage wristwatches has for all practical purposes been exhausted. Perhaps all the good timepieces have already found happy buyers. This situation is particularly dismal in the United States.

So what is an avid wristwatch collector to do? Should one resort to purchasing new timepieces only? Try it! I recently walked into a major watch retail store in a big city and saw, to my dismay, that virtually all new men's wristwatches were bigger and heavier than pocket watches. In addition the dials were so obscured and cluttered as to make simple time reading a challenge. I would feel ridiculous carrying such an atrocity on my wrist. Of course prices have gone up into the stratosphere as well.

I remember that in my early days of watch collecting, when I could not spend much money on collectible timepieces, I would roam the side streets of Geneva, Zurich, or Basel where small and specialized watch retailers were located. These shops were for the most part quite small and many of them were on the second or third floor of buildings, away from the glitter of major thoroughfares. These retailers primarily sold lesser known brands, as well as "new old stock" vintage timepieces. In these places the inventory of new wristwatches from lesser known manufacturers could be quite extensive. It isn't common knowledge that those so called "lesser brands", however, were supplying parts as well as entire movements (ebauche) to some of the big name houses. An added advantage was that these establishments were usually family run, with a rather sparse clientele. One could talk at leisure with the owner, usually an elderly man, and acquire tons of useful information about wristwatches, virtually unobtainable anywhere else. Another big advantage was that the prices were much more affordable if you were willing to buy a good product without paying a premium for a known brand name.

Over the years I have acquired a few of those lesser known brand timepieces and they, by and large, have performed wonderfully, at times even better than major brand products.

Here are some examples of my happy acquisitions:

The Berney automatic wristwatch shown, is quite small at 31 mm diameter but it tells the time, date, day of the week, month as well as moon phases. Except for the time, which is adjusted by the crown, all other functions are adjustable via small recessed pushers around the side of the case. Few timepieces with similar complications are as easy to adjust as this one. What's more, this wristwatch keeps time to a level equal to that of major brands much more expensive timepieces.



The rectangular Oris automatic (Right), is relatively small at 25 by 30 mm, but it has a calendar as well as luminous hands that still glow in the dark with astonishing brightness, even after nearly 20 years of ownership. The Revue Thommen (Below), is also quite small at 34 mm diameter but it features a calendar that is very easy to read thanks to its magnifying



window, as well as an alarm that could wake up even a sound sleeper. This is one of the loudest mechanical alarm wristwatches that I have ever seen.

The Kelek automatic chronograph (Below), with a calendar, is a special edition timepiece (number 100). It is relatively small for an automatic chronograph. As a eose certified chronometer it is among the best timekeepers in my collection. When I purchased It, I made a special request for that particular special edition serial number, and have been accommodated simply by being friendly with the manufacturer.

The Forget automatic wristwatch (Below), with date and day of the week indicators, is relatively small (33 mm) and



unique. The leather strap is devoid of a regular buckle and the wristwatch is fastened to the wrist from the front via a pair of small buttons. Once you get used to that system, it beats all other fastening methods. The manufacturer is located on small premisses on one of the

main thoroughfares on the shores of lake Geneva, within a short walking distance from Patek Philippe and other major brand manufacturers. Mr. Forget, the owner of the firm, meets customers personally, is very friendly, helpful, patient and informative.

I believe that savvy watch collectors interested in good timepieces, rather than being swayed by known brand names, would do very well by looking at the products of lesser known manufacturers. By doing so, one may come across some unusual and indeed unique wristwatches virtually unavailable from the major brands. Naturally, such explorations require considerable effort as well as an open mind. However, the satisfaction of finding unusual timepieces in unexpected places at affordable prices, simply can't be beat. Happy hunting! ■

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

**NOVEMBER 16TH
WILL BE OUR LAST
MEETING FOR 2008
NO DECEMBER MEETING**

There will not be a newsletter for December either. This is the one time of the year when your Board of Directors and Editor take a break to just relax and spend some time with the family.

Southwest California Regional at the Del Mar Fairgrounds

**Friday Nov 21 & Saturday Nov 22nd
(Mart opens at 9:00 am)**

**NAWCC Members and guests only Friday
Open to the public on Saturday**

*Next to the Greater Los Angeles Regional
in Pasadena, this is the largest
Clock & Watch show in the west.*

*For directions or more information:
website: www.nawcc59.org
Phone: Verlyn (619) 224-4820*



Happy Birthday

**David Clarkin,
Dave Coatsworth,
Ferdinand Geitner,
Jim Gilmore, and Ernie Jenson**

Ventura Chapter 190 people

Each issue of our newsletter will feature members of our chapter with a short biography or some of their horological interests to help us get to know them better.

Bill Frank

By George Gaglini



Originally from Chicago Illinois, Bill came to California by way of Albuquerque New Mexico and Phoenix Arizona.

It was in Albuquerque, at the University of New Mexico, that he met Susan who soon became Mrs. Frank. She was studying Psychology and he majored in Electrical Engineering. Around 1966, they moved to Phoenix in search of the terrific jobs in the field of Aerospace. The journey continued to California where, in 1968, Bill enrolled at California State University, Northridge and earned a Masters Degree in Software Engineering. His background and education resulted in positions through the years at Raytheon, Teledyne, Litton Industries and Northrup Grumman. In all of those companies Bill developed military software and worked in related disciplines.

With her degree in Psychology, Susan became a teacher and, for thirty years, taught in the elementary grades of various Southern California School Districts

When he was a young boy, Bill received from his Grandmother several wind up and electric alarm clocks. Curiosity forced him to disassemble them. Most clock enthusiasts can relate to the fact that he doesn't remember ever getting them back together. But his fascination with clocks influenced many buying decisions as he and Susan shopped through the years in antique stores, swap meets, garage sales, etc.

This resulted in dozens of clocks needing repair with many of them exceeding the repair budget. Joining the NAWCC, with all its benefits, still didn't result in any repaired clocks. The perfect solution to the dilemma was Ken McWilliam's clock repair class at Ventura College. Bill signed up for the basic class, and then every other class and workshop Ken taught.

While attending the classes, Bill met our President Mike Schmidt who, at the time, was organizing Chapter #190. Bill joined the new Chapter soon after it was launched in 2006.

Bill is retired and resides with his wife Susan in Camarillo. ■

CLASSIFIED PAGE

This page is dedicated to advertising for Chapter 190 members. It is, of course, free to members.

SERVICES OFFERED

The Montecito Clock Gallery

Restoration, repair, sales of clocks and watches.

Ferdinand Geitner, mbhi, owner and operator

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FOR SALE

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Dave Coatsworth

dave@daveswatchparts.com

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Contact:

Tom McKnett

805-444-6383

- Chronometer -

Hamilton 21 Marine Chronometer in running condition, with
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Please contact: Giorgio Perissinotto

E-mail: giorgio@spanport.ucsb.edu

(I'm teaching in Spain so there is no local California phone)

- Watch Repair Tools -

I'm just starting out and need just about everything.
I would prefer to purchase an entire collection of old
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Please contact:

David Clarkin **Tel: 805-988-4384**

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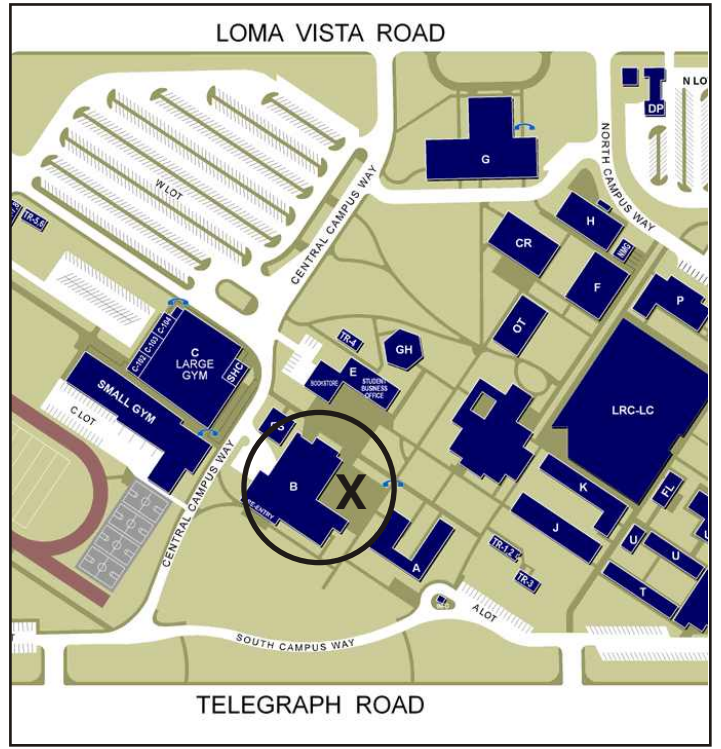
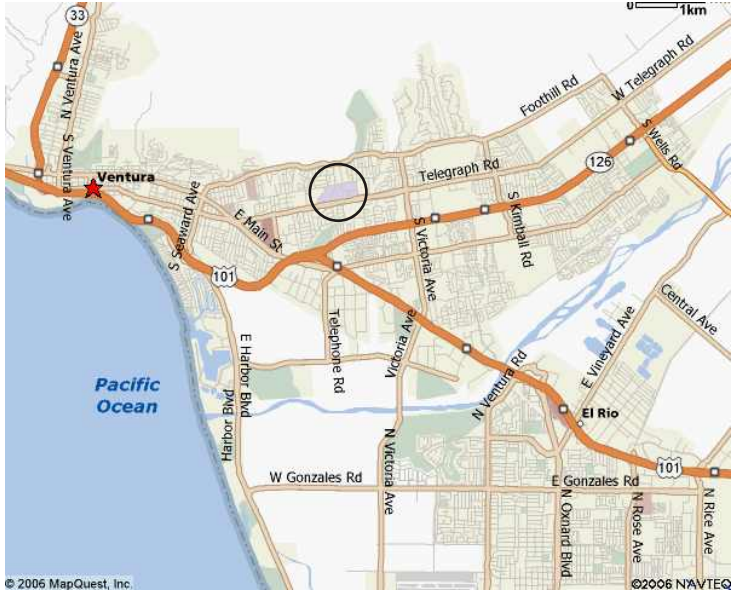
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Tel. 805-650-8800

The Chapter 190 meetings are held the third Sunday of each month. (No meeting in December)
We will meet in the cafeteria on the Ventura College campus. The cafeteria is located in building "B", east of the gym and athletic field.



Hope to see you there!

November 2008 Issue

NOV 16
NEXT MEETING

Chrono Times
 If Undeliverable return To:
 17738 Superior St. Unit 21
 Northridge, CA 91325