



The Story of "My Grandfather's Clock"

by Ken McWilliams

Over the past few years, this old song has popped up many times in conversations around the chapter. Everyone remembers it but none could get past the first verse. Virginia Norwood gave a pretty good rendition of it at a workshop several years ago. I filed it away in the back of my mind to research it and find the complete lyrics and the story behind the song. But, like so many of the items on my mental to-do list, it just kept getting re-filed. Then, at a mart someone mentioned it again and I decided it was time to do it.

So, here are the lyrics and story behind "My Grandfather's Clock."

In Piercebridge England, in north Yorkshire, stood an old hotel called the George Hotel. It was a rest stop for weary travelers and was run by two Jenkins brothers. In the lobby of the hotel was an old floor clock. The clock kept perfect time and locals would stop by to set their watches. This was uncommon, since clocks in those days were generally not noted for their accuracy. It kept perfect time that is, until one of the old Jenkins brothers died. The clock immediately started losing time, first a few minutes or so every day, then a minute per hour, then several minutes an hour.

Clockmakers were called in to repair the clock, but no matter what their level of expertise, it seemed nothing could be done.

On the day the second Jenkins brother passed away, in his ninetieth year, the old clock quit running completely. It never ran again.

Attempts to fix the clock by the new owner of the George Hotel failed. The clock, having become somewhat of a mysterious landmark in the hotel, was left to stand in the corner of the lobby, dusted and polished, but silent.

Sometime during the 1870's, a man, a songwriter from the States, came to stay at the George Hotel. He was told the story of the Jenkins brothers and the old clock.

It inspired him, and when he got back home he wrote a tune about the clock and its story. To personalize the lyrics somewhat

he decided to write about one old man and visualized that old man as his own grandfather.

The song was named, "My Grandfather's Clock." It sold over a million copies of sheet music. In 1876 it was one of the two most popular songs in America; the other being, "I'll Take You Home Kathleen."

The song, "My Grandfather's Clock," became very well known, but perhaps even better known than the tune, is the name for that type of clock. Before Henry Clay Work named the tall standing clock in his song "Grandfather's Clock", those types of clocks were known as case clocks, coffin clocks, standing clocks, upright clocks, long clocks, etc. It was only after the song was written that they became known as "Grandfather Clocks."

Henry Clay Work was born in Middletown, Connecticut on October 1, 1832. During his life he wrote numerous popular American tunes, many during the Civil War period of the United States. Among his tunes are "Marching Through Georgia" and the nineteenth century hit, "The Ship That Never Returned." This song inspired re-working of the lyrics in "The Train That Never Returned," which inspired "The Wreck of the Old '97," a popular piece among fiddlers. The Kingston Trio also borrowed the tune by Work and added a melodic bridge in a further re-working of the original idea of "The Ship That Never Returned" and called it "The MTA Song." This song tells the story of a man named Charley who never returned and was doomed to ride the Boston subway non-stop, just going round and round the system.

This would normally be the end of the story but, while I was researching information for this article, I came across a very interesting anecdote.

In Japan, American folk songs are very popular in grade schools. They are actually taught in music class. A popular Japanese singer, Ken Hiria, recorded "My Grandfather's Clock" a few years ago and it went to the top of the charts. He did it in Japanese and English. I listened to a portion

of the English version and it sounded very good.

So, even though this song is over 135 years old, it looks like it may survive a while longer.

Maybe it's time for an American singer to dust it off and revive it again.

First Verse

My grand-father's clock was too large for the shelf,
so it stood ninety years on the floor.
It was taller by half than the old man himself,
though it weighed not a pennyweight more.
It was bought on the morn of the day he was born,
and was always his treasure and pride;
But it stopped, short, never to go again
When the old man died.

Chorus

Ninety years, without slumbering (tick, toc, tick, toc)
His life seconds numbering (tick, toc, tick, toc)
It stopped, short, never to go again
When the old man died.

Second Verse

In watching its pendulum swing to and fro,
Many hours had he spend while a boy;
And in childhood and man-hood the clock seemed to
know and to share both his grief and his joy.
For it struck twenty four when he entered at the door,
With a blooming and beautiful bride.
But it stopped, short, never to go again
When the old man died.

Third Verse

My grandfather said that of those he could hire,
Not a servant so faithful he found;
For it wasted no time, and had but one desire
At the close of each week to be wound.
And it kept in its place, not a frown up-on its face,
And its hands never hung by its side;
But it stopped, short, never to go again
When the old man died.

Fourth Verse

It rang an alarm in the dead of the night,
An alarm that for years had been dumb;
And we knew that his spirit was pluming for flight
That his hour of departure had come.
Still the clock kept the time, with a soft and muffled
chime, As we silently stood by his side,
But it stopped, short, never to go again
When the, old man died.

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

By Mike Schmidt

Special Exhibit

A clock exhibit to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the death of Thomas Tompion, England's pre-eminent clock and watchmaker, will be at the time symposium.

The 2013 NAWCC Time Symposium, "*Time for Everyone: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Public Time*," promises to be a horological educational event of global significance. Not only will about two dozen speakers of international renown participate in the proceedings, but a special exhibition of clocks, watches, and sundials by the pre-eminent master Thomas Tompion (1639–1713), will be on display.

Several of the pieces, from private collections, have not been seen publicly for many years. The exhibit, "*Majestic Time*," will be displayed in a custom display cabinet that has been designed and built for this special exhibit. This "once in a lifetime" exhibit will be displayed at the Pasadena Hilton Hotel.

Given the large interest this Symposium is generating, I encourage all members and friends to register early through the website (www.timeforeveryone.org) both for Symposium participation and for hotel rooms at the main conference hotel, as I expect the block of reserved rooms (at a significantly reduced price) at the Pasadena Hilton Hotel to sell out soon.

The Ventura and Santa Barbara County Chapter 190 is a proud supporter and host for the 2013 Ward Francillion Time Symposium. www.timeforeveryone.org

Chapter 190 continues to offer educational opportunities. Congratulations to instructor Lex Rooker and all of the eleven students who recently completed the NAWCC Field Suitcase Workshop-FSW 101. The next workshop offered for this group, or any NAWCC member who has completed the FSW101, will be a FSW 102 "Time & Strike Spring Barrel with Rack & Snail Strike." This 4 day workshop is scheduled for August 30, 2013. The coordinator is John Darby 805-648-2903 email john@copperfields.biz

Chapter 190 will once again offer our "Introduction to Antique Clock Collecting & Repair & Maintenance" workshop. This 2 day workshop is open to members, friends, and the public. The only prerequisite for this workshop is "Interest & Curiosity" in mechanical clocks. All tools, movements, and knowledge are supplied. The date for this workshop is September 7th & 8th 2013. For information contact Mike Schmidt, phone 805 988-1764 or e-mail eaglecreekclocks@msn.com

A Field Suitcase Workshop FSW 200 "Fundamental Skills for Clock Repair & Lathe Preparation" will be offered. The four day workshop is for January 24-27, 2014. Ray Marsolek will be the instructor. If you have questions or interest in this workshop or others that may be offered please contact me, Mike Schmidt eaglecreekclocks@msn.com

The Sunday morning workshops have been very popular and very well attended. The workshop this Sunday will begin at 10:30 A.M. It will be led by George Antinarelli and Ken McWilliams. The opening subject will be "Bulle and Barr Clocks". Members are encouraged to bring their clocks. Any subject or questions on watches and clocks are always welcomed. The coffee will be on early!

See you at the meeting

Mike Schmidt

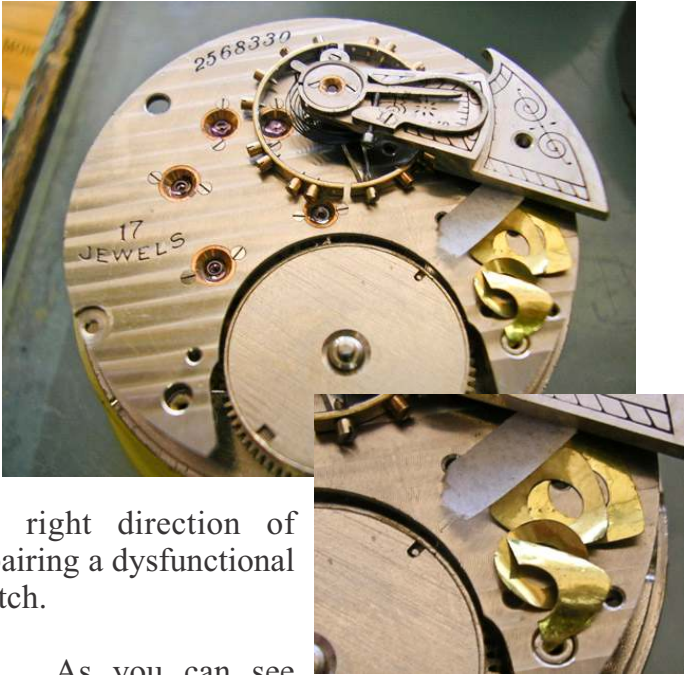


Tales From the Bench

by Ferdinand Geitner

Spare parts anyone?

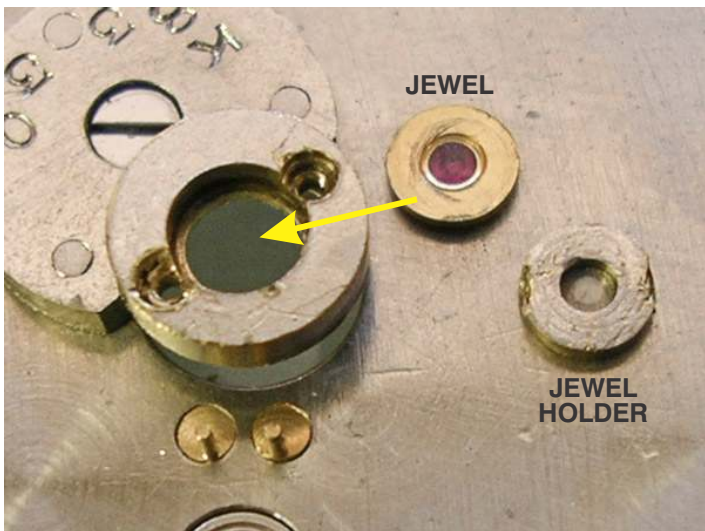
Often it is the extra things we find when dismantling a watch or a clock which can point one in



the right direction of repairing a dysfunctional watch.

As you can see from the picture there were far too many washers and strips of paper (often used as spacers) under the balance bridge for the watch to be in original condition. Why were they necessary? Who put them there and how long was the watch in this condition.

After dismantling, cleaning, checking the parts for wear and assembling the watch, it became apparent that the balance staff locked up when screwing the



balance bridge down. That's why the spacers were necessary. Did someone fit a staff which was too long??? Just speculating.

But! Even with the spacers providing necessary end shake, the very nice amplitude when dial up dropped sharply when the movement was turned dial down.. Investigating this phenomenon I realized the (quite simple) cause of this phenomenon. The lower balance jewel had been replaced (jewel holes often show cracks) with one that was just a little too small so the pivot did not run *in* the hole of the jewel but was sitting just *on top* of it, reducing the distance between the jewels, increasing friction and necessitating the spacers to increase the distance for some end shake of the balance. Creating a problem trying to solve another one!



After replacing the lower balance jewel the end shake was correct (without washers) and the amplitude was happy dial up and down! One Happy watch and a Happy customer.

Welcome New Members



Richard Little
from Oxnard



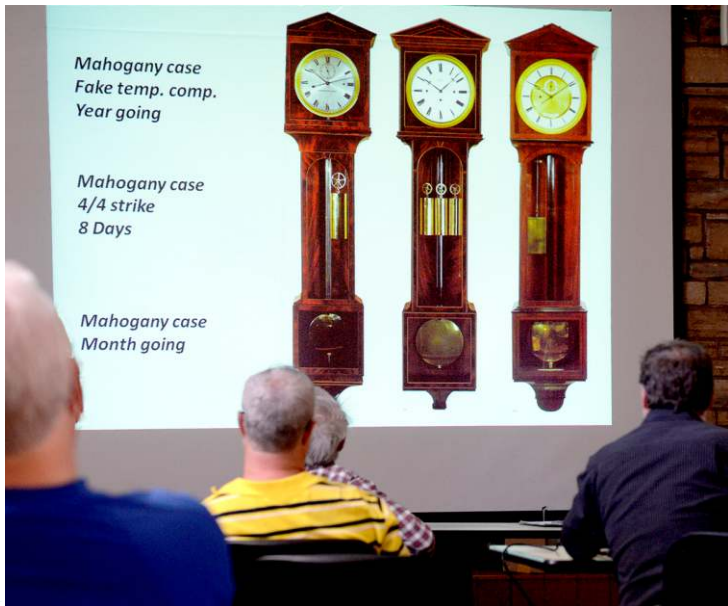
Robert Ingham
from

Anderson Island, Washington



FACES SEEN AT MAY'S MEETING

Photos by Bill Robinson



Ingenuity, The Clockmakers Best Tool

by Ken McWilliams

In clock repair, determining the cause of the problem is half the battle, correcting the problem is the other half. Usually, correcting the problem is the easiest part, but on occasion, the how to accomplish it can be challenging. Being able to solve problems and respond to challenges is an absolute must for anyone involved in clock repair.

I recently ran into a problem with a large double fusee movement with a crown wheel escapement. The previous repairman had modified the escapement and proper adjustment was not possible. The crown wheel had to be moved about a 10th of an inch on the arbor. Normally this wouldn't be much of a problem but in this case the pivot was flushed with the end of the escape wheel. This left nowhere to push except on the pivot itself, which was very long and fragile. I thought about drilling a hole slightly larger than the diameter of the pivot in a brass rod and use that to move the arbor on the escape wheel. I rejected that idea because too many things could go wrong.



After looking at the arbor and crown wheel assembly, I decided that I could make a screw jack, and gently move the crown wheel on the Arbor. (See photos) I took these photos after I had moved the crown wheel, but you get the idea.

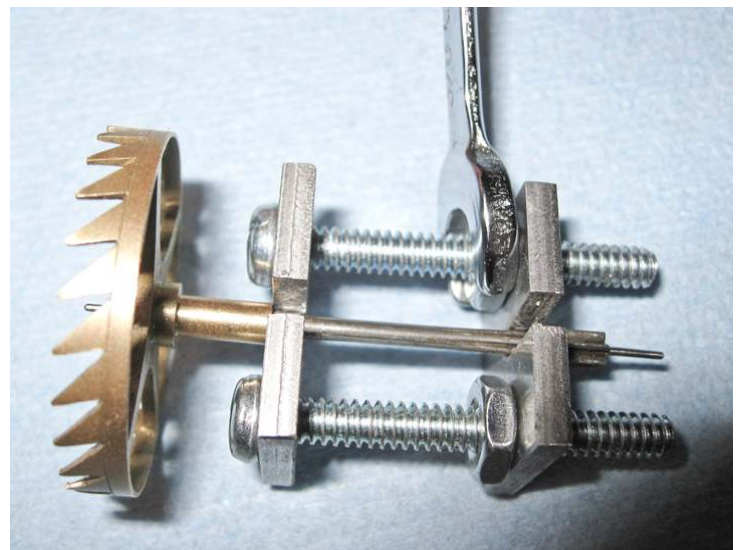


To make the screw jack, I started with two pieces of plate steel, 0.75" X 1.0" X 0.125". I clamped the two plates together and drilled a 0.089" hole in the center of both plates. This is slightly larger than the arbor diameter (Clamping the plates together during the drilling operations assures perfect alignment) Next, using a #22 drill, I drilled a hole through both plates in line with the

center hole and near the outer edge. The #22 drill allows for 60% thread for a 10-32 tap. I took one of the plates and enlarged the two outer holes with a #8 drill to allow for clearance of the 10-32 screw.

I then milled a 0.125 slot from the edge of the plate almost to the center of the whole in the middle of the plate. The slot is larger than the hole to make it easier to slide it onto the arbor. (This slot could also be made using a jeweler's saw.) With a 10-32 tap I threaded the plate with the #22 holes, then inserted a 1 1/2 inch 10-32 steel screw and tightened it.

I put a nut on each screw and then slid the bottom plate onto the assembly. The Jack assembly was slid onto the arbor and the nuts were adjusted until the top plate came in contact with the escape wheel and the bottom plate came into contact with the pinion. Using an open end wrench, I turned each nut about quarter of the turn at a time until the escape wheel moved the distance that I wanted. I was a bit surprised at how easily I was able to make the adjustment.



I'm going to make another one of these, only this time, instead of a fixed size hole in the center I'm going to make a tapered slot. Probably from about 0.05" to 0.150". I'll be able to use this on various sizes of arbors. ■

The **JULY** Chapter 190 Meeting
is July 21, 2013

Sellers may start setting up at 11:30

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

The Meeting starts at 1:15

“Fusee Clocks”

Bill Robinson will bring a few examples of clocks from his collection for Show and Tell. Other members are asked to bring their fusee clocks to help in the discussion of what is a true fusee?

Robert Gary has volunteered to edit the NAWCC archived chapter program library. He will present a 15 minute edited program on “Alarm Clocks”. Robert is seeking constructive input from members on his editing process.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The following workshops are scheduled for 2013:

Introduction to Antique Clock Collecting, Repair & Maintenance. Sept. 7 & 8. A 2 day, open to the public Workshop. Prerequisite: Interest & Curiosity in mechanical clocks. All tools & movements supplied.

Contact Mike Schmidt phone; 805 988-1764
e-mail; eaglecreekclocks@msn.com

This Month’s Mini-Workshop

At 10:30AM

The opening subject will be **“Bulle & Barr Clocks”** The workshop will be led by George Antinarelli and Ken McWilliams. This is a round table discussion where everyone gets to join in and learn.

THE WORKSHOPS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

If there is a topic that you would like to learn about, just mention it at the workshop. We are always looking for good topics

Recently completed FSW F101 workshop



Left to right

First Row, Richard Little, Michael Arnoldus, Rodney Baker, Peter Racette, Instructor Lex Rooker

Second Row, Stephen Marks, Robert Ingham, John Darby, George Sessions, Bob Hendrix, Phillip Keys, Stephen Watts



The first Ch 190, public two day clock workshop



Happy Birthday

July

**Barb Barnes, Steven Schechter, Mike Schmidt,
Kathi Sheffrey, & Kim St Dennis**

August

**John Berney, Alan Bloore, Jim Chamberlain,
Bill Frank, Royce Hulsey, Ken McWilliams,
Merl Meach, Ralph Napolitano, & David Potts**

CLASSIFIED PAGE

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

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WANTED

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Width:

German Box: 13" • 3 Vienna R/A's: 13-1/2" to 14"

2 Vienna R/A's: 16" • 1-wt Vienna Regulator: 17"

I fully realize that crowns do not attach uniformly and may need some customization to make them fit."

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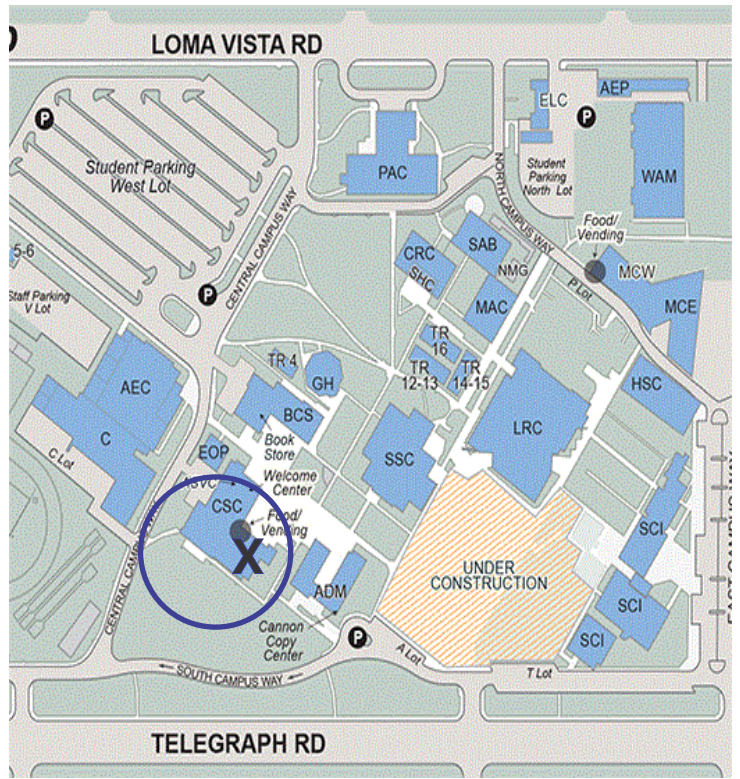
- Chronometer -

Hamilton 21 Marine Chronometer in running condition, with inner box and gimbals; outer box not essential.

Please contact: Giorgio Perissinotto

E-mail: **giorgio@spanport.ucsb.edu**

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



July - August, 2013 Issue

NEXT MEETINGS

JULY 21

AUG 18



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ADMISSION _____	X \$ 5.00 _____
Admission at the Door.....\$7.00 Each	
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Background of the James Arthur Lecture
Jim Cipra, Chairman, NAWCC Ward Francillon Time Symposium Committee

James Arthur Lecture: The Time of Our Lives
William J. H. Andrewes, author, horological consultant, and sundial maker, Concord, Massachusetts

Welcome
Jean-Lou Chameau, President, California Institute of Technology

Introductory Remarks
Mostyn Gale, Chairman, 2013 NAWCC Ward Francillon Time Symposium

The Origin of the Universe and the Arrow of Time
Sean Carroll, California Institute of Technology

The Meaning of Time in Biology
Lynn Rothschild, NASA Ames Research Center; Stanford University; and Brown University

Time and the Brain
David Eagleman, Baylor College of Medicine

Recycling Time
E. C. Krupp, Griffith Observatory

The Bell and the Clock: The Need for Public Time
Dava Sobel, author, East Hampton, New York

From Water to Weights: The Mechanisms and Functions of Public Time Devices from the Early Middle Ages to c. 1650
Anthony Turner, author and historian of scientific instruments, Le Mesnil-Le-Roy, France

Precision Crunching, 1650-1900: Measuring Time Accurately over 250 Years
Jonathan Betts, Royal Museums Greenwich, London, U.K.

Bond Time: Pendulum, Spring, and Wire
Donald Saff, art historian, artist, and author, Oxford, Maryland

The Evolution of Tower Clock Movements and Their Design over the Past 800 Years
Mark Frank, horological researcher and collector, Chicago, Illinois

Extreme Amateur Timekeeping: From Harrison to Einstein
Tom Van Baak, physicist, mathematician, operating systems software engineer, and precision clock enthusiast, Bellevue, Washington

Time and the Early Modern Economy
Tracy Dennison, California Institute of Technology

The Great Age of the Tower Clock
Chris McKay, author and specialist in turret clocks, Wimborne, Dorset, U.K.

Affordable Time: Americas Contribution
Chris H. Bailey, formerly of American Clock & Watch Museum

The Standardizing of Civil Time
Geoff Chester, U.S. Naval Observatory

The Taming of Time
Jed Z. Buchwald, California Institute of Technology

From Bain to Shortt: Electrical Timekeeping, 1840-1940
James Nye, Kings College London and Antiquarian Horological Society, U.K.

The Quartz Revolution: Quartz Clocks and the Public in Britain, 1930-60
David Rooney, Science Museum, London, U.K.

Atomic Clock: Does Anyone Really Know What Time It Is?
Thomas OBrian, National Institute of Standards and Technology



Keynote Address: Time, Einstein, and the Coolest Stuff in the Universe
William D. Phillips, Nobel Laureate, National Institute of Standards and Technology

Visit www.timeforeveryone.org for details on schedule and advance registration.



www.timeforeveryone.org