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NAWCC MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

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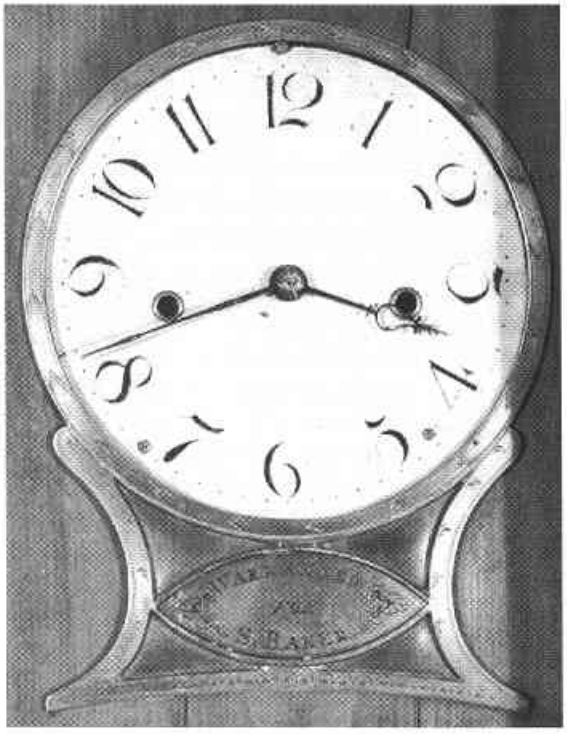
Museum Hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 9–4; Sunday, May–September, 12–4; closed Monday

NEW ENGLAND ACQUISITION

by Pat Tomes, Curator

Near the end of 1993 the Museum was fortunate to purchase a very delightful and unusual early nineteenth century dwarf clock. Through the diligent efforts of NAWCC Treasurer Joe Katra and Executive Director Tom Bartels, this clock is now part of The Watch and Clock Museum's Collection. The brass dial is engraved "Warranted for S. Baker," otherwise, the clock appears to be unsigned. However, while inspecting the clock, Mr. Katra and Mr. Bartels found the name Hasham scratched on the surface of the underside of the bell. Mr. Katra recognized the name Hasham as one of New Hampshire's more eccentric clockmakers, and further investigation led to the New Hampshire Historical Society where he found numerous details on the life of Stephen Hasham.

A closeup of the dial of the Steven Hasham dwarf clock.



The dwarf clock is a case design originating in the eighteenth century. Dwarf cases most frequently followed the line and proportions of a standard tall case. But some, as in this example, followed proportions of a shelf clock. This design seems to be an attempt to make the clock appear like a spring driven bracket clock, which was rare and sought after in the United States during this period. The design of the scroll work on the base of the bonnet is reminiscent of earlier looking-glass frames. We also find similar scroll work used on the cases of Simon Willard's thirty-hour wall clocks. The case is a combination of sophisticated inlay and native cabinet-making skills. Notice how the circular curve on the left side of the bonnet flairs out into the air and the right does not. Today this feature enhances the clock's charm.

The case is also constructed in an unusual manner. The photo shows how the fluted columns actually make up the entire corner of the case rather than being attached to it. Though we have seen this same construction technique on an English tall case clock, normally one finds glue blocks placed along the inside corners, but in this case they are only along the back. An extremely thrifty use of materials!

There are many unknowns in the Hasham history and we thank Donn Lathrop and Fred Shelly for clarifying many of the details which we were confused about. (Look for an upcoming BULLETIN article by Shelley and Lathrop on the tower clocks of Hasham which includes a detailed account of his life.) Stephen Hasham (Hassam is used in early records) was born in Boston and baptized in 1764. From his documented work it is apparent that he served an apprenticeship but we are unsure with whom. Some have reported he apprenticed with Daniel Burnap while others believe it doubtful he would have traveled to Connecticut for his apprenticeship. While still a young boy his family moved first to Grafton and shortly after to Worcester. It seems most likely he would have served his apprenticeship in Worcester. He apparently was in Charleston, New Hampshire, by 1787 where he married his first wife at the age of 23. He had five children to this woman, Theodosia, who died in 1841. Five months after his first wife's death, at the age of 76, Hasham remarried and had five more children!

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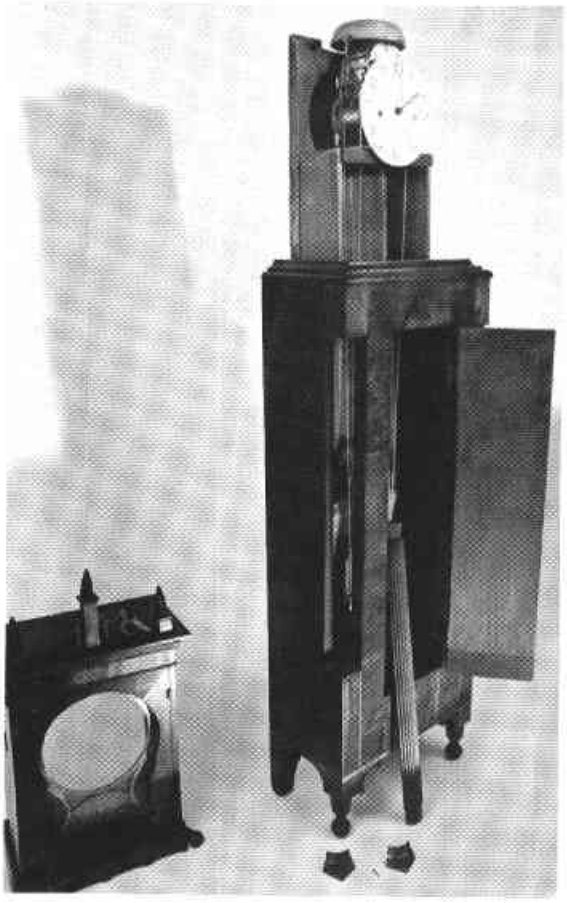
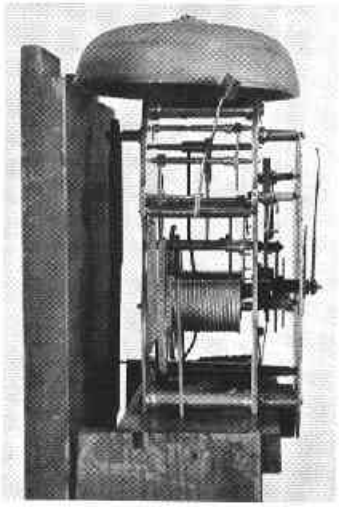


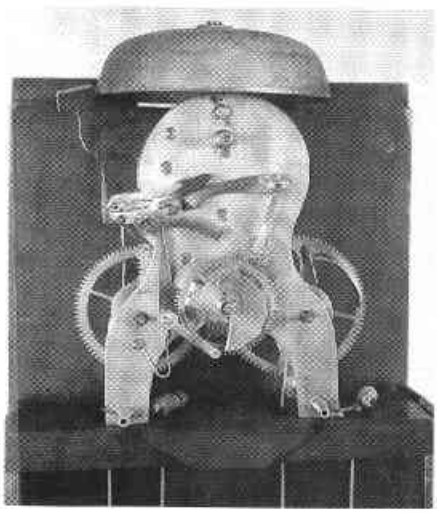
Dwarf clock, c.1800, attributed to Steven Hasham, Charleston, New Hampshire. The clock case stands 50" tall and is made of pine, cherry and mahogany with mahogany veneer and a satin wood inlay. The dial is $5^5/_8$" in diameter. The brass dial bezel is attached to the bonnet and is engraved "Warranted for S. Baker." The eight day brass movement (shown in the series below) is $5^7/_8$" high × 4" × $2^1/_{16}$". The pendulum length is $23^1/_2$". It uses cut steel pinions and rack and snail striking.

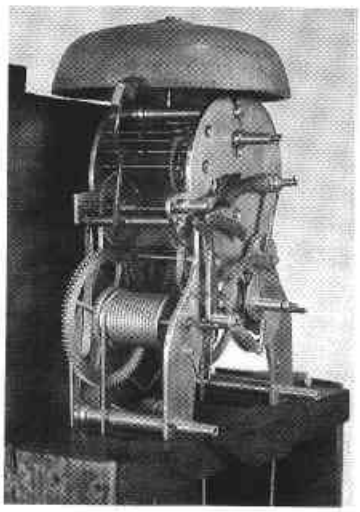
Hasham's tall case clocks are numbered, with #145 being the highest number known. In addition to tall clocks, Hasham made a number of tower clock movements, or town clocks as he advertised them, and also two-dial wall clocks. In 1820 Hasham advertised that "he has quit clockwork for that of keeping a Public House." His movements appear to use similar design details to those found in the dwarf clock. The plates are cut with a scallop at the bottom and sides, forming an arched-leg design. Another predominant feature appears to be the spare rectangular flange left protruding to hold the hammer pivot. Donn Lathrop has also pointed out that Hasham never seemed to have filed the posts flush with the plate, a feature apparently consistent on all of Hasham's documented work.

The design of this example is also unusual because of its 50" height. Samuel Mulliken (1720–1756) of Massachusetts made a shelf clock of similar proportions and dial design but it only stands less than two feet tall. The brass dial bezel is a design believed to have originated with the Willard clockmakers in Grafton, Massachusetts. We find the same dial design on one of Mulliken's clocks.

The engraved "Warrantee" on the clock implies that the piece was made to special order for S. Baker and likely is the only







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one to exist. The plates of the eight-day brass movement are cut in an unusual design and suggest a New Hampshire origin. Jane Varkaris, in her new book *Early Canadian Timekeepers,* pictures a similar plate design used by Jordan Post of York and his apprentice. Post spent time both in Massachusetts and in Vermont before immigrating to Canada. It is likely he was influenced by similar design principles.

Perhaps our strongest connection between this clock and Hasham is the name S. Baker on the dial. In 1797 a Susanna Wetherbee married Jonathan Baker in Charleston, New Hampshire. Hasham was the only clockmaker in Charleston at the time and Susanna Baker just happened to be a half-sister of Hasham's first wife. It is certainly not unlikely that a clock of this caliber would be presented to a new bride, made by the only clockmaker in town and a relative at that!

LIBRARY NEWS

by Eileen Doudna

Five new videotapes available through the NAWCC Lending Library are announced in the Program Committee column of this issue of the BULLETIN. Three new tapes were announced in the December 1993 BULLETIN. A wide variety of topics are discussed in these new tapes providing something for every NAWCC member, whether their interest is watches or clocks!

"The NAWCC Tower Clock," Tape #572, is a 120-minute account of the construction of the NAWCC tower clock from the beginning to the dedication in May 1993. While the NAWCC staff and museum visitors watched this project step-by-step over many months, this videotape allows you to see it in two hours. The tape includes all phases of the construction as well as a description of the movement, how it works, and scenes of the May 15, 1993, dedication. Instructions for borrowing tapes are included with the listing of videotapes.

Some members will be interested in a recent donation to the Reference and Research Library. Philip T. Priestley (author of NAWCC Supplement #20, *Watch Casemakers of England 1720–1920*) has recently donated copies of five early papers of the family of Aaron Lufkin Dennison. Dennison is known as the founder of the American watch industry. These papers include: a memorial to Eliphalet Whorf Dennison (1819–1909), brother of Aaron L. Dennison; a letter from Aaron L. Dennison to Eliphalet Whorf Dennison, December 31, 1876; an autobiographical sketch of Aaron L. Dennison covering his life up to 1849; an autobiography of Aaron L. Dennison; and a brief account of Aaron L. Dennison's life by Eliphalet Whorf Dennison, 1871. These documents are an important addition to the reference and research collection and thanks go to Mr. Priestley for his thoughtful donation. Members should watch the BULLETIN for an article being prepared by Priestley which will discuss these papers.

One of the most frequently asked questions that I receive is how a new member can best learn about collecting watches or clocks. In the remainder of this column I will discuss watch collecting from the library perspective. In a future column I will discuss clock collecting.

The first, and most important, thing someone new to watch collecting should do is attend local chapter and regional meetings. Get to know other members, many of whom will gladly share information and experiences. Be sure to attend relevant educational sessions at these meetings, as much can be learned both from the presenter and from the question and answer sessions. Walk through the mart room, be observant, and become familiar with which members sell what types of watches. Allow yourself time to get acquainted with the members and activities of your local chapter.

The other component to gaining knowledge is to read as much as one can on the subject of watches. The NAWCC BULLETIN is a great source of information. The *BULLETIN Master Retrieval Index* can be borrowed from the Library and serves as a key to all the BULLETINs from the beginning through December 1985. (This edition of the *MRI* is now out-of-print but watch for the new edition in mid-1994.) Each December issue from 1986 through 1993 contains an index for that year. By using these tools, articles in back BULLETINs are easy to locate.

In Peyton Autry's six-part series on collecting watches which appeared in BULLETINs 224, 231, 243, 253, 261, 265, and 267 (1983–1990), he shares his collecting philosophy and his collection with the reader. He has divided collecting into the "shallow broad" versus "narrow deep" approaches and discusses these approaches with illustrations from his collection. Back BULLETINs offer many, many other articles on watches which are worth careful review when one has selected an area in which to concentrate their collecting.

Numerous books on collecting are available through the NAWCC Lending Library. A list of lending items is available free from the Library simply by calling us or dropping us a note.

Roy Ehrhardt's *American Pocket Watches Identification and Price Guide Beginning to End . . . 1830–1980* and Cooksey Shugart's *Complete Price Guide to Watches* are both excellent sources of very basic information needed by the beginning collector. While most of each of these books is an identification and price guide, both contain introductory material that should be essential reading for all beginning collectors. Both contain tips on collecting; appraising or valuing items; grading watches; watch terminology; information on railroad watches; technical and historical information; and other information. A careful perusal of this information will greatly enhance one's knowledge of watches. The time needed to read this introductory material is more than made up for in the wealth of information gained.

M. Cutmore's *The Watch Collector's Handbook* introduces, ". . . the reader to the world of watches and watch collecting." Chapters include a historical survey, a technical survey, and information on collecting and repairing. A glossary of terms, a section on hallmarks and a bibliography conclude this helpful volume.

H. G. Harris's *Collecting and Identifying Old Watches* offers basic knowledge on the development of watches from about 1500 until 1830 when mass production methods were introduced. Excellent illustrations of watch components clearly illustrate many of the terms the collector needs to become familiar with. Black and white photos and color plates highlight the text discussion. Brief biographies of some well-known early watchmakers are given and a glossary with full definitions is included.

Donald DeCarle's *Watches and Their Value* is another excellent beginner's source. Set up as an alphabetical listing of terms with illustrations of many, this book reviews types of watches and the terminology applicable to watches. A list, with brief biographies, of eminent watchmakers is also included as well as a suggested reading list.

David Criss has written a *Collector's Price Guide to American Pocket Watches* which, like the other books mentioned above,

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contains much basic information to assist the beginning collector. Criss includes a list of, "23 do's and don'ts of pocket watch collecting," as well as, "21 ways to collect American pocket watches." Brief histories of many firms are given with black and white illustrations of their products. A section is also included on the watch collector's basic maintenance program.

For those interested in American pocket watches, George Townsend's three volumes are a tremendous source of information. These volumes include: *Almost Everything You Wanted to Know About American Watches and Didn't Know Who to Ask; American Railroad Watches;* and *The Watch That Made the Dollar Famous: Encyclopedia of Dollar Watches.* Serial number information is given as well as historical data and hundreds of line drawings done by Townsend himself. The longest of these volumes is 87 pages in length and each contains a great deal of information concisely presented.

M. Cutmore's *The Pocket Watch Handbook* traces the history and development of the watch, primarily those produced from 1750 to 1900. Illustrations are used to show how different movements work. For those interested in collecting watches, information is included on repairing, buying and selling, and basic research. Museums with watch collections are listed in the final chapter and a glossary, bibliography, and reference list is given for each chapter.

M. Cutmore's *Watches 1850–1980* traces the history of the watch from 1850 to modern times. This time period covers the machine-made watch. This is a companion volume to the previously discussed book, bringing the history of the development of the watch up to modern times and including electrical and electronic watches. Histories of firms are included and many illustrations, both line drawings showing workings of various components and black and white photographs, highlight the text. Collecting and repairing are briefly discussed.

Paul Chamberlain's *It's About Time,* published in 1941 after his death, has become a classic in the field of horology. The book is divided into two sections, the first being a discussion of escapements. This section includes line drawings and photographs as well as a discussion of the merits and demerits of various escapements. The second part of the book consists of biographies of many horologists.

Videotape #507, "What to Watch for in Buying a Watch" is aimed at the beginning collector of pocket watches. Done by Joe Shaffer and Bill Meggers, this 33-minute tape shows how to take the movement from the case, and how to take the dial and hands off to inspect for rust, replacements, and faulty parts.

These books, BULLETINs, and videotapes provide the beginner with the terminology and basic information crucial to a successful and enjoyable hobby.

Once these basic books have been studied, and the terminology is familiar to the collector, numerous other books on the history of watches (both pocket and wrist) are also available from the Library. As the beginning collector becomes more familiar with the subject and focuses on an area of interest, the library staff can suggest additional reading material.

BE SURE TO USE THE LIBRARY! IT IS A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP!

The Willard House and Clock Museum

11 Willard Street, North Grafton, MA 01536. Phone: 508-839-3500
Museum Hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 10–4; Sunday, 1–5; closed Mondays

SIMON WILLARD'S CAPITOL CLOCKS

by John R. Stephens, Curator

Included among the sights seen by the thousands of tourists who visit Washington, D.C., every year are two of three gallery clocks that Simon Willard made for the United States Capitol. While many visitors do not realize that the clocks were made by Simon, these clocks have been keeping time in the nation's capitol beginning in the early nineteenth century.

Simon made the first capitol clock for the Senate chambers in 1801. This clock was made in the manner of the Improved Timepiece which Simon patented in 1802. Simon traveled to Washington to install the clock himself. Unfortunately, this clock was destroyed in 1814 when the British army burned Washington. According to John Ware Willard's book, *Simon Willard and His Clocks,* it was at this time that Simon met President Thomas Jefferson. The friendship grew over the years, and led to Simon's construction and installation of the tower clock for the Rotunda at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville in 1826. The clock and the Rotunda were destroyed by fire in 1895.

The United States Government again commissioned Simon to make two additional clocks for the Capitol in 1837. As documented in *Simon Willard and His Clocks,* the gallery clocks Simon made for the House of Representatives and for the Supreme Court were set up and tested in Simon Willard, Jr.'s shop located at 9 Congress Street in Boston. Simon accompanied the clocks to the Capitol and set them up himself.

The gallery clock made for the Supreme Court, then located in the United States Senate Chambers, was ordered by Associate Justice Story. When the Supreme Court erected its own building in 1859, the clock was moved across the street and installed in the Chief Clerk's office. The clock can still be seen today in the Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court.

At the same time Simon installed the House of Representatives' clock. The movement was fabricated especially for a case designed and made in 1819 by sculptor Carlo Franzoni. The famous Franzoni case depicts the allegorical figure, Clio, the muse of history. This clock can be seen today in Statuary Hall in the Capitol.

While many Americans may not have the opportunity to see the variety of Willard clocks located in New England town halls, churches and museums, a visit to the Capitol and the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. will afford them the opportunity to see two of the clocks commissioned by the federal government and made by Simon Willard for all the citizens of the United States. See photos of the clocks next page.

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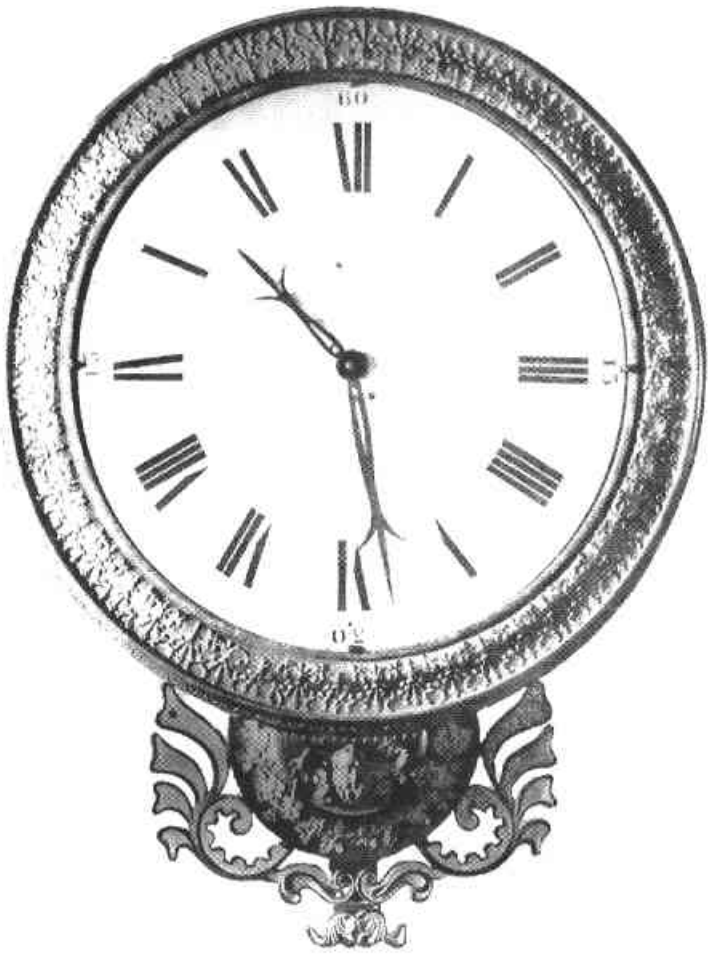
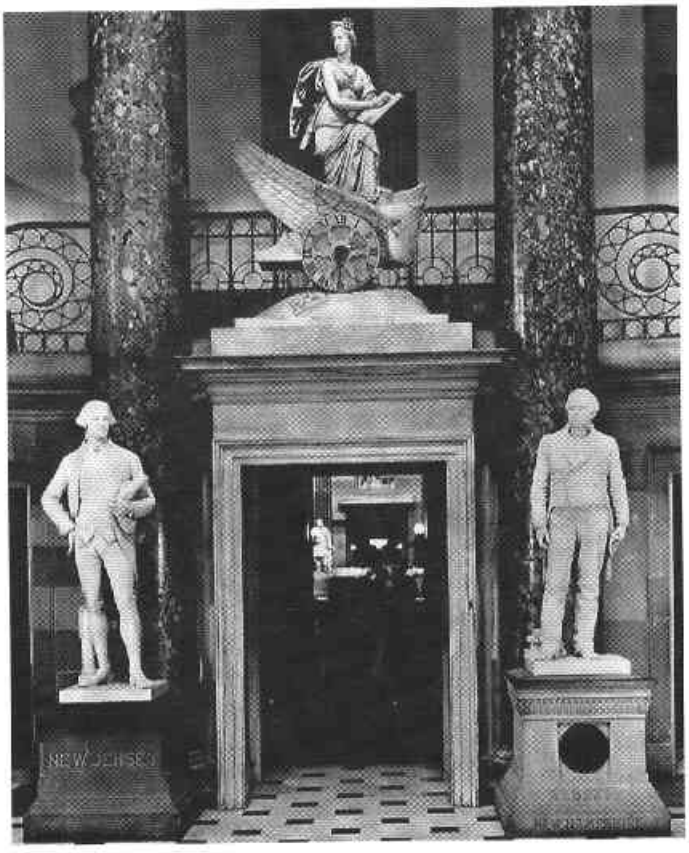
Right, the Simon Willard clock in the office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court, Washington, DC.



Below, two views of the Simon Willard clock especially made for a case designed and made by sculptor Carlos Franzoni, now in Statuary Hall, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.