

Paul Foley's work, *Willard's Patent Time Pieces, 1800 to 1900*, published in 2002, is the most recent and by far the most substantial, providing accurate information, comprehensive quality images, research, and first source documentation of the work of this community of early clockmakers, ornamental painters, casemakers, and more.

Tackling the fragile issue of Patent references on the glasses and an explanation of their content has been avoided by most writers, because there is simply little information available about them.

I hope readers will be tolerant of this and see my effort not as an attempt to be the last word of authority, but simply another voice in the process of preserving and clarifying the legacy of Simon Willard.

Differing Patent references suggest deference to the Patentee, while still exploiting his great "brand." Willard's invention of the Improved Timepiece clearly became a "family affair." Some past attributions are questionable, as a great deal of misinformation was published, even by experts, over many years.

The year 2011 marked the 100th anniversary of *A History of Simon Willard, Inventor and Clockmaker* by John Ware Willard, Simon's great-grandson. Though the information in this book is flawed, it is the basis for much study. We are indebted to Willard's great-grandson in recording his family's important legacy.

Willard's innovation shaped a new direction for a more economical, accurate eight-day timepiece.

The community of clockmakers that surrounded the Willards became the vanguard of innovation and change.

In 1822 Simon Willard put a notice condemning the "vile performances" that were passing for his work by other makers using his name or reference to his Patent on their glasses. At this time "mass produced" wooden works clocks, and later cheap brass clocks began their ascent, driving down prices and making hand-crafted work unsustainable. The Depression of 1837 sealed their fate.

In adding this unusual Patent Timepiece to the body of evidence, I hope over time a better understanding of "Patent" references found on early Improved Timepieces and their remarkable glasses will emerge.

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About the Author

Richard Perlman earned a degree in Fine Arts at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY. Upon graduation he served in the USMC. In 1967 he started a graphic design business in New York City where he served major corporations, government, and institutions for over 30 years.

Now retired, he enjoys pursuing his interests in horology, reading, writing, researching, cooking, yoga, golf, and traveling. Images and symbols have always been a part of his work. As a clock enthusiast these themes have caught his interest in horology. He may be reached at fanchisco@msn.com.