

The Pendulum

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF WILLARD HOUSE & CLOCK MUSEUM



- FALL 2021 -

Message from the Director



Willard At 50 - Celebrating Willard House and Clock Museum And Looking To The Future.

Members and Friends,

Greetings to all and welcome to the Fall edition of "The Pendulum", the official online publication of the Willard House and Clock Museum. This is a work in progress, but you can clearly see the direction we are heading.

In 2021, your contributions allowed the Museum to invest time, energy, and resources in a number of major efforts including a highly successful Music Series, a popular Plein Air Painting Series and a wonderful collaboration with "Apple Tree Arts" which kept our barn full of kids, music and presentations throughout the month of July.

We hosted family and specialty club events, and created STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) content for educators and young learners and gave a few exceptional young horologists an antique clock to take home!

We also improved and expanded our online reach into the local community - and of course, we've continued to update the Museum's collection of clocks, tools, and library- all for the delight and benefit of our patrons, visitors and community.

Moving into 2022, we'll be celebrating our 50th Anniversary! Your continued generosity will ensure the Museum can create larger, more comprehensive programming that serves our diverse and growing audiences - educators, school children, local residents, horologists, historians, musicians, cabinetmakers, genealogists, architects and more.

For this year's annual appeal, we're launching our "50,000 for 50" campaign. Our goal is to raise \$1,000 for every Willard House anniversary year. Your generosity will help us expand the Museum's educational outreach programs, update the collection, invest in the Museum's grounds, and bring new and interesting on-site, and online programming.

Meeting the \$50,000 goal in 2022, sets the stage for ensuring the vision of the museum's next 50 years, for the advancement of the art, science and mystery of horology and the vital support of this unique and historically important museum. The future of the Willard House and Clock Museum needs your support this year more than ever.

With deepest gratitude, I am sincerely yours,



[Help Us Reach Our Fundraising Goal](#)

Annual Robinson Lecture

50 Years of Collecting Excellence:
Treasures of the Willard House and Clock Museum

A Presentation by Robert C. Cheney

Sunday, November 14, 2:00 - 3:00 PM EST
Live-Streaming on Facebook



After a two-year Covid-19 hiatus, Willard House and Clock Museum will be re-launching the Annual Robinson Lecture.

The Robinson Lecture, named in honor of the museum's founders, Imogene and Roger Robinson, is an annual event held now for over twenty years that features lectures on the Willards,

from the technical to the historical by leading scholars in the field.

In celebration of Willard's 50th Anniversary, the 2021 Robinson Lecture, hosted by Robert C. Cheney, will be held on Sunday, November 14th 2021 at 2PM. The presentation will be live at the museum and for the first time, streamed live to those interested who can't make it to Grafton.

Our speaker's introduction to the Willard homestead began at age six (images above and right, August, 1959) when he accompanied his dad to the property on his mission to save the original 18th century Willard clock shop from natural destruction, perhaps by moving it to Old Sturbridge Village, the 12-year old outdoor history museum of colonial living and the all-important related trades.



Despite the late Bradford W. Cheney's efforts for several years, he was unable to arrange funding for the project through the NAWCC and several other sources. He finally had an opportunity to introduce the subject to Roger and 'Jean' Robinson, who by a rare coincidence, had just bought their first Simon Willard clock to furnish their own early Grafton home. Thus began the life-long passion of Roger and Jean Robinson to purchase this important property, restore it, and then to collect and furnish the oldest house in Grafton with a very important pedigree.

Fast forward to 2021, the Willard House and Clock Museum is celebrating its 50th Anniversary! Now a 501(c)(3) non-profit museum holding the largest collection of Willard family furnishings and clocks in the world.

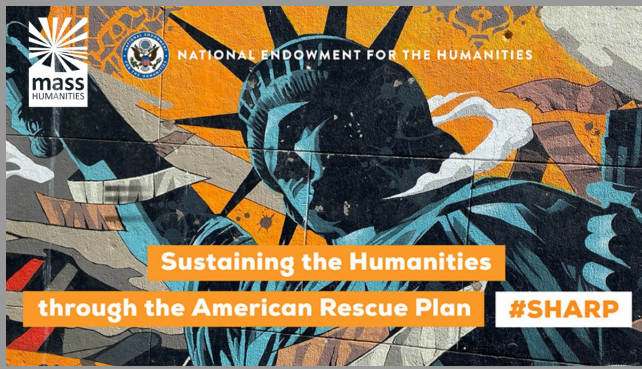
The museum holds clocks by all of the original makers, Benjamin, Simon, Ephraim and Aaron during their active time in Grafton, circa 1750-1800, and their extensive later work in Roxbury and Boston into the early 19th century. In addition, the next two generations of Willards, also superb clockmakers, are represented tracing their work to approximately 1850.

The presentation will discuss a selection of these important clocks, family holdings, and the field of clock making in the 18th century. The remarkable life-long passion of Dr. and Mrs. Roger Robinson to preserve this proud national heritage will be the lesson for us all to cherish the lessons of the past.

For more information on our speaker Robert, [click here](#). Space is limited so reserve early.

[Reserve Now](#)

[Watch Via Live-Streaming](#)



Breaking News

Willard House Awarded Grant From Mass Humanities.

Willard House was one of 90 organizations across Massachusetts to receive a grant from Mass Humanities. The “Sustaining the Humanities through the American

Rescue Plan” (SHARP) was funded via the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) by the American Rescue Plan.

Grants of up to \$15,000 were awarded to retain or recruit staff, replace lost revenue or rebuild audiences. Says Cheney, “Willard House experienced a fifteen-month closure and this funding is crucial in getting the word out to prospective visitors and businesses that we have engaging events and activities ready to launch. We’re honored and grateful for the help from Mass Humanities and NEH.”

Collection Update

Willard House is Gifted an Intriguing and Rare Find



A very recent addition to the collection is this **Benjamin Willard, Roxbury, No. 163** mahogany case 8-day clock with rocking ship dial, c. 1770.

The movement and dial are representatives of a very small group of clocks with nearly identical dials carrying the engraved names of Benjamin in Roxbury, Simon in Grafton and Ephraim with no location noted.

Accession#2021.1

Research on this group is presently being conducted by Robert C. Cheney to sort out the shop structure and methodology of the Willards at this time shortly before the American Revolution.

Robert would be very interested in hearing from you if you know of or own a Willard clock with this type of distinctive dial. Please contact him if you have an example to share.
robert@willardhouse.org
Acession#2021.1



Additional detail of the rocking ship dial. The tin arch background is painted with a fort and small town in the background while the painted tin ship, flying the British flag as it should date before the Revolution, rocks gently back and forth over the waves with the swing of the pendulum.

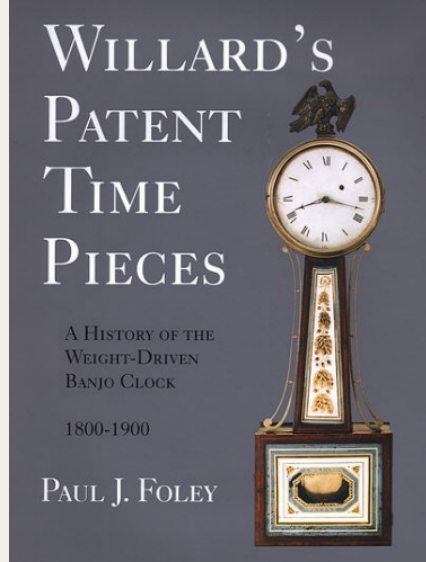
This simple automaton would add considerable interest and mystery to the dial particularly among viewers not accustomed to mechanical movement.

Sorry for the cell phone photos, it has not yet seen our professional photographer.

Gift of Anne Williams Van Lonkhuyzen

Reading Corner -Featured Book-

"There is no better book on the planet to learn the



subject of the Patent Timepiece than this one!" says Willard's executive director, Robert Cheney. He continues. "Case closed! and be sure to study the Section VII: Biographies. It alone is well worth the price of the book!"

In this issue, we are featuring Paul J. Foley's extensive study, *Willard's Patent Time Pieces: A History of the Weight-Driven Banjo Clock 1800-1900*.

This hard-cover, 358 page masterwork is an essential reference for any student, collector or dealer in early American clocks, furniture, antiques or decorative arts.

\$75.00. Order now and shipping is FREE!

[Order Now](#)

Research Corner

Paul J. Foley

Swift Justice



Simon Willard Jr. (1795-1874) had been in partnership with his father in Roxbury starting in 1823. He went to New York City to learn chronometer making and in 1828 he branched out on his own in Boston advertising his "New Watch-Making Establishment" at No. 9 Congress Street. For many years he was very successful in the sale and repair of quality watches and Marine chronometers. In 1856 he brought his son Zabdiel into the business as Simon Willard & Son. His store was in an ideal downtown location on the

southern end, first floor, of the four-story *Boston Traveller* Newspaper building. This building was centrally located off State Street, one block south of the Old State House. Simon Jr. remained at that location until at least 1870.

The Heist

In August 1862 the Boston newspapers reported on the daring robbery of his store. It occurred about ten o'clock on Sunday morning August 3rd when most of the businesses in the area were closed. A Mr. Frederick Loeber ran a saloon in the adjoining

space to Willard on Congress Street. He came by his business shortly after noon and discovered the burglary. The thieves had entered his business with false keys and broke through the partition into Simon's business.

Mr. Willard and the police were at once notified and it was ascertained that the robbers had taken between sixty and seventy watches, valued at from \$100 to \$300 each, and five valuable chronometers. An attempt had been made to bore into the safe, but they only succeeded in slightly damaging the lock. The safe contained a large amount of valuables. The property taken was valued at about \$7,000. (*Boston Herald*, August 5, 1862)

Boston Morning Journal.
AUGUST 4, 1862
BOSTON AND VICINITY.
Bold Robbery of Willard's Watch and Chronometer Store.
One of the boldest and most successfully executed store robberies which we have been called upon to record for a long period, occurred yesterday forenoon, in the very heart of the city, and on one of our principal thoroughfares. The store of the Messrs. Simon Willard & Son, the well known dealers in watches and chronometers at 9 Congress street, was broken into and robbed of a large number of very valuable chronometers and gold watches, to the total value of

Appearances indicated that the *rogues* were perfectly cool while about their criminal work, inasmuch as they took a fresh keg of larger from the ice chest, in Mr. Loeber's bar room, tapped it, and left Mr. Loeber's tumblers, from which they drank, in Mr. Willard's store. (*Boston Morning Journal*, August, 4, 1862)



The Worcester and Framingham Connection A Trunk and A Carpet Bag

No trace of the thieves was found during the afternoon, and it was concluded that they had left town. (*Boston Morning Journal*, August 4, 1862; *Massachusetts Ploughman*, August 9, 1862) With the idea that they might attempt to get on the New York train on route, Detective Leeds started

from the Worcester depot on the next train. When the train reached Framingham he saw two well known *roughs*, Dennis Sullivan and Henry Mellon, alias "Tall Doctor". Mellon had a trunk which he was putting on the cars, and Mr. Leeds at once arrested him. Sullivan attempted to escape but was quickly caught. The men and their baggage, consisting of the trunk and a carpet bag, were taken on the train and carried to Worcester. On the way a loaded *billy* was taken from Mellon.

When the train reached Worcester, the men were taken to the Lincoln House and the baggage searched. In the trunk and carpet bag were found all the watches and chronometers stolen from Messrs. Willard, and an excellent set of burglar's tools. The men were lodged in the jail at Worcester overnight. (*Massachusetts Ploughman*, August 9, 1862)

When the train reached Worcester, the men were taken to the Lincoln House and the baggage searched. In the trunk and carpet bag were found all the watches and chronometers stolen from Messrs. Willard, and an excellent set of burglar's tools. The men were lodged in the jail at Worcester overnight. (*Massachusetts Ploughman*, August 9, 1862)

The Property Recovered - In Less Than Nine Hours

The arrests were made, and the valuable stolen property all recovered in less than nine hours after the robbery. The captured goods were displayed in the Police

Chief's Office on Tuesday afternoon and the department congratulated on their prompt action. (*Boston Evening Transcript*, August 4, 1862; *Boston Traveler*, August 4, 1862)

The two men arrested were well known to the police. Sullivan had been recently before the Police Court, and Mellon was also up for subordination of perjury, but managed to get clear. (*Boston Herald*, August 5, 1862)

In the August 19th Criminal Session of the Superior Court, Henry Mellon and Dennis Sullivan were tried, convicted, and sentenced, on an indictment for breaking and entering the watch and chronometer store of Simon Willard & Son in the daytime of Sunday, August 3rd and stealing some \$5,000 worth of property.

The defendants were without counsel, and when called up for sentence, both declared themselves innocent of the crime alleged.

Mellon stated that he was somewhat advanced in years, and had an only son, 12 years of age, at school in a distant state, who had no one to provide for him but himself and that he had always endeavored to do. For his son's sake, he hoped the Court would be as lenient as possible in passing sentence.

Sullivan stated that he had never before been convicted of any such crime and did not think he would have been of this if he had been provided with counsel. He did not know how he got into this scrape, but presumed he got into it in the same way that many other innocent young men got into similar scrapes. He also asked the Court to deal leniently with him.

Justice Served In A Timely Fashion

Assistant District Attorney Brewster said that in consideration of the enormity of the offenses, he deemed it his duty to state that Mellon was known to the Police of this and other cities, as one of the most expert burglars in the United States. In his official capacity he himself knew Sullivan to be an idle and disorderly person, having been convicted of that offense two months since, and the case was now pending before the Supreme Court on exceptions. His business was nothing more nor less than that of a thief, and he hoped such a sentence would be imposed as would relieve the community from further depredations by the defendants for some time to come.

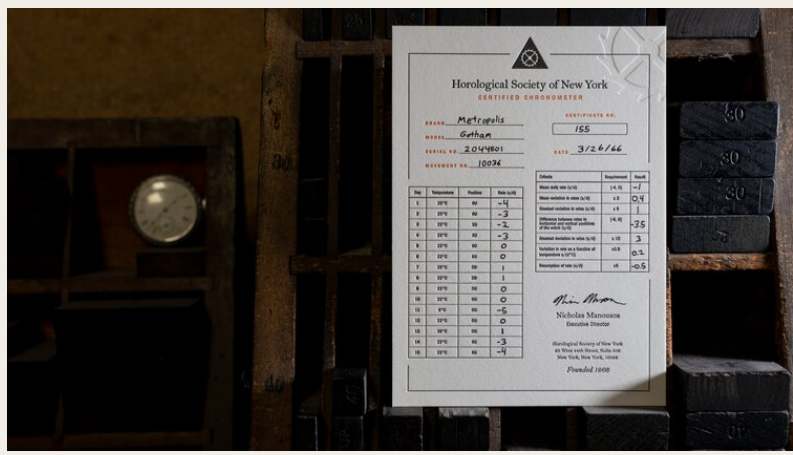
Judge Russell then sentenced each of the defendants to five years of hard labor in State Prison, the two first days thereof to be in solitary confinement. Had the crime been committed in the nighttime he said the sentence would have been much more severe. (*Boston Morning Journal*, August 20, 1862)

So, in less than three weeks (sixteen days) of the robbery the culprits were caught, arrested, indicted, convicted, and sentenced. And all the valuable stolen property was recovered and returned intact. That's *SWIFT JUSTICE*.

Partner Update

Horological Society of NY Announces New Certification Program

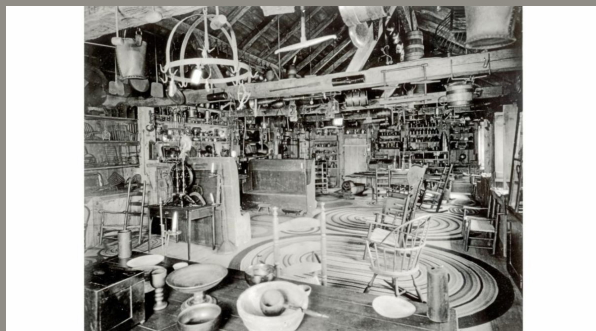
Our partner, the Horological Society of New York, has introduced its Chronometer Certification Program, a new testing service for watchmakers and watch manufacturers that wish to have their watches certified as a chronometer by a third party.



[Learn More About HSNY's Certification Program](#)

Events

WHCM Lecture



Courtesy OSV

WHCM Plein Air Series



Plein air painting by C Nixon

Downsizing Grandma

Robert C. Cheney, leads a lively and informative talk on how best to tackle the daunting task of downsizing Grandma (or anyone else)

This lecture is loaded with practical advice.

Broadcast October 23, 2:00 to 3:00pm

[Watch The Talk](#)

November 13

[Register](#)



Plan Your Visit

Museum Hours:

Open Tuesday- Saturday

Tours: 10:30am and 2:00pm

Sunday, Monday and
all national holidays: Closed

Museum Fees:

Members FREE

Adults \$10

Seniors 60+ \$9

Kids 13 plus: \$6

Kids 12 and under: FREE

Veterans and First Responders: FREE

[Sign Up For A Tour](#)

Thank You Sponsors and Donors

The Willard House and Clock Museum is very grateful for the generous support of the following corporate and personal donors. At Willard, we try very hard to maintain a high level of programming throughout the year and without outside support, this would not be possible.

If you or your business wishes to support the programs, donations of any size are welcomed and go to continued and new events here at Willard.

[Please Donate](#)

If you would like to learn more about special events or customized corporate or foundation programming, please contact: Robert@willardhouse.org Thank you.

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