



- SPRING 2022 -

Message from the Director

50
years



Change of the seasons and more in store for the future of Willard.

The magnificent clock of the solar system presents a compelling message: *Tempus Fugit*. With the passing of the Vernal Equinox, Spring is already moving along quickly, but because I as am a bit tardy writing this message, the Summer Solstice is just around the corner! This is a lovely time in Grafton with the Rhodies, Azaleas and Iris in full bloom and our Spring Events already successfully well underway.

With the coming of the Summer Solstice, Pumpnickel Puppets on June 11th and on the 18th, the musical virtuosos Guy Van Duser and Billy Novick come to Willard. By the the longest day of the year (21st), we can look forward to July filled with kids from the Appletree Arts Summer Programs and then The New Black Eagle Jazz Band on August 7th.

It is encouraging to see as many as 100 people come to an outdoor event or concert here, many of whom have never been to Willard before. We are working hard to bring these same people back, perhaps to tour the house and workshop, to bring their children to see magical puppets perform, or, to learn more about "Clocks for Kids". Hopefully, good family programming will encourage a return visit, and perhaps spark an interest in horology along the way.

Last weekend, Willard hosted the annual meeting of Chapter 8 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors who have been gathering here annually for over 40-years. With four horological lectures and a tour of the new exhibit, "Horology in Art" lead by exhibit curator Bob Frishman, it was a very full day of horology. Willard will always have horology on our menu for the future.



The Trustees met recently with a full agenda of reports, budget analysis and a keen eye to the next 50-Years of Willard. One of the suggestions gaining traction is to build a horological research center which would be an expansion of Willard serving new, but consistent purpose: to display a very important promised clock and watch collection in beautiful gallery settings, add classroom/workshop space for teaching the sympathetic restoration of clocks and watches, provide a modest auditorium for lectures and programming, house an horological research library (over 5,000 volumes with more to come!), staff offices and storage.

If acted on, a new building would be carefully situated somewhere on our 52-acres allowing easy access to all we have to offer. This would of course, in no way impact our treasured historic building or its pristine setting.



Trustees have asked that your director explore the possibility of building a horological research center and present a report at the next meeting in the fall. This center would ensure that horology would find its rightful place among the other long-regarded sciences, perhaps as one of the most important sciences, although never mentioned in K-12 standard textbooks. Further, it would train the next generation of clock and watchmakers to care for the incredible timekeepers passed down throughout the last centuries, currently in museums or private collections.

It is fitting that during the celebration of '50-Years at Willard', we explore the next-fifty for horology, science and the Willard House and Clock Museum. But alas, *Tempus Fugit!* We must act soon before our population forgets the engaging sound of a ticking clock, or how important horology has been in virtually every scientific discovery made in the modern world.

We appreciate your continued support in the past, present and future, allowing us to share the importance of horology and the many contributions of the Willard clockmakers. For now, the future is our challenge. If you have special skills you can offer with the planning phase our horological research center, I am always happy to hear from you!

Sincerely,

Robert

robert@willardhouse.org

Library Update

Suggested Yearly Reading



For many years, I needed yearly reinforcement of the unique nature of the clockmaking trade. Fortunately in my library, I had copies of some of the best reading necessary to become fluent in the language and methodology of an American, 18th century shop. Among the best for this purpose.

-Shop Records of Daniel Burnap, Clockmaker
-Connecticut Clockmakers of the 18th Century, both by author Penrose Hoopes.

Shop Records of Daniel Burnap was published in 1958 and has long been out of print. It is a great auction or Ebay find. The second Hoopes book originally published in 1930, has been reprinted several times, including as Dover paperback in 1974.

These are seen more readily in auction and Ebay venues than the Burnap publication for modest prices.

I would be very remiss if I neglected the life-long study of Charles F. Hummel, With Hammer in Hand, first published in 1968, and reprinted for the third time in 1976. I cherish my personal copy given to me by the author in 1978 while visiting Winterthur with my friend and New Hampshire clock scholar, Charles S. Parsons.

This book thoroughly documents the work of three Dominy craftsmen of E. Hampton, NY. from 1765-1820; their tools, their clocks and furniture and their life with a vast amount of surviving documents allowing Hummel to tell a fascinating story. It is considered to be the pièce de résistance of any craftsman's library.

A thorough Google search will turn up options for these books and if you are lucky any of the three will come your way! Or, if an NAWCC member, you may want to check their lending library.

RCC

Willard Opens

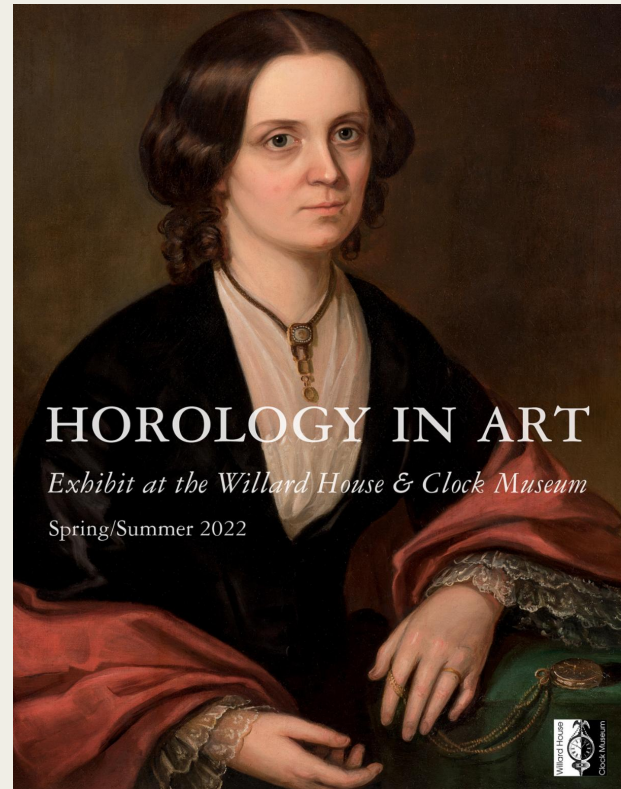
Horology In Art Exhibit

May 15th to June 25th

On May 5th, Willard opened the new *Horology In Art* exhibit to the public.

Curator, Bob Frishman, opened the installation at a special reception hosted by WHCM.

Among the original artworks are a c. 1830 folk-art portrait of a mother and child holding a pocket watch; the preparatory watercolor by Anatol Kovarsky for a 1961 *New Yorker* cover showing a watchmaker in his shop; and a portrait miniature on ivory, circa 1840, in which a young woman's watch and chain are visible. The portrait on the right is of Catherine Gates Willard from our collection. Can you find the horology?



The exhibit included a high-quality guide designed to lead visitors through the displayed items - more than 60 in all.

Research Corner

Paul J. Foley

"24 - Pounder"

During the Revolutionary War, the Roxbury Highlands figured prominently in the Siege of Boston. In 1775, the colonists built major fortifications here known as the Lower Fort and High, or Upper, Fort. The two forts commanded strategic views of and access to both Boston Neck and the road between Boston and Dedham, where the rebels kept a depot of army supplies. The Lower Fort encompassed two acres of land in Roxbury between (now) Cedar, Highland, and Linwood Streets. The High Fort was



located a short distance to the south and is today part of Highland Park. These were not highly fortified structures but reinforced earthen berms built on top of the natural rocky ledges of Roxbury puddingstone. (Kittredge House Report – Landmarks Commission)

British 24-Pounder Cannon Ball. Iron 5 ½” diameter. The broad arrow marks it as British government property. (USS Constitution Museum Collection)

In July 1775 General Washington inspected the work and was very pleased with the result. (*Boston Herald*, June 21, 1896)

Alvah Kittredge (1799-1876) was a Boston furniture merchant and real estate developer. He was in a number of partnerships including an 1830-33 Boston partnership with cabinetmaker James Blake (1780-1851) as Blake & Kittredge. Blake had worked with cabinetmaker William Fisk and had been in an 1802-04 partnership with clockmaker Aaron Willard with a shop inside Aaron’s compound on Washington Street. Blake & Kittredge advertised patent timepieces for sale by Willard and others. Kittredge would have known Aaron Willard from these business dealings. He became quite wealthy in real estate development and other business interests.



Alvah Kittredge Roxbury mansion house built in 1834 on Highland Street corner of Linwood. Photo circa 1880 looking west. The wooden observatory tower was added by a later owner and used for outdoor summer neighborhood concerts. (BPL Pictorial Archive)

In 1834 Kittredge built a large estate on a hill in Roxbury. This site contained the remains of the Revolutionary War Low Fort. This site is $\frac{3}{4}$ mile distance from Roxbury Village where the Willard brothers first set up business.

Roxbury historian Francis Drake reported that Kittredge, during building of his mansion house in 1834, found that the breastwork greatly obstructed the light coming

in from the west side so he had it removed. Kittredge related the following incident:

“Before the work was taken away, Mr. Aaron Willard, the well-known clockmaker, then very aged, visited me and told me that when he was sixteen years old he came to Roxbury as a fifer of a company of minute men from Grafton, his native town, and that they with many others were set at work immediately to throw up the redoubt here. After a hard day’s work they threw themselves upon the ground behind it and slept soundly, wrapped in their blankets. Just as the sun rose the next morning, they were roused from their slumber by a twenty-four pound shot, which ploughed through the breastwork, and scattering the soil on him and others,

finally buried itself in the earth. Without waiting for further compliments of same nature, they speedily withdrew, standing not upon the order of their going, and regardless of bruises, tumbled over each other in their hasty descent of the steep rock in the rear. He pointed out the spot where he judged the ball must have lodged, and there it was found when I afterward took the work down. This interesting relic, slightly corroded by time and rust, is preserved by Mr. Kittredge’s family.”
(Drake, Francis S. Town of Roxbury: It’s Memorable Persons and Places, p. 374.)

Kittredge’s large estate was eventually sold and divided up for house lots. Over the years the original building lost a wing, several extensions, and a roof cupola. It was moved a short distance and rotated ninety degrees to accommodate other development. By the 1960s it had fallen into serious disrepair and deterioration. It was vacant for twenty years. Eventually it was purchased by the non-profit Historic Boston Inc. and in 2014 a \$3.8 million-dollar renovation was completed restoring the exterior and converting the interior into five condominiums. (The Alvah Kittredge House: Boston Landmarks Commission Study Report 2016)



Kittredge house today after 2014 restoration. One of only a few high style Greek Revival wood frame houses still standing in Boston.

Events

WHCM Music Series



June 18
3:00 to 5:00 PM
Willard Barn

Guy Van Duser
&
Billy Novick

Musical Tour de Force
Swing Jazz Acoustic Music

\$10.00 Per Adult: Members Free

[Order Tickets Now](#)



August 7
2:00 to 4:00 PM
Apple Tree Arts Great Hall
Grafton, MA

New Black Eagle
Jazz Band

One of the premier jazz bands
in the world

\$10.00 Per Adult: Members Free

[Order Tickets Now](#)

WHCM Plein Air Series



Coming This Summer
Enjoy over nine acres of beautiful,
rolling Willard House grounds



Plan Your Visit

Museum Summer Hours:

Open Thursday- Saturday

Tours: 10:30am and 2:00pm

Large groups by appointment only

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](#)

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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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