



- WINTER 2022 -

Message from the Director

50
years



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

Members and Friends,

Greetings to all and welcome to the Winter edition of "The Pendulum", the official online publication of the Willard House and Clock Museum. This is our third installment which is being sent seasonally. For those in Florida, I'll skip the New England weather report, as national news media has that pretty well covered.

Let me be blunt: I hate asking for money. During my four years as director, I have been very reluctant to ask for money, or raise fees, or charge more than necessary for lectures, musical performances and other events. With your generosity and the guidance of our Board of Trustees, we have seen modest growth in our endowment and kept the lights on. Despite nearly three years of pandemic and all the chaos inflicted on non-profits and the financial world itself, Willard is healthy and actively serving our audience within the constraints of good practice.

Healthy yes, substantially growing no. We learned a valuable lesson from Covid-19: Even a healthy endowment can be cut in half in one business week during a crisis. In fact, by one count, over 14,000 small non-profits went belly up in the last two years. I cannot in good conscience run an important museum with just a "healthy" endowment; we need a reasonable expanded endowment for guaranteed sustainability for the next 50-years of Willard's future.

To that end, Willard has launched a campaign for endowment-enhancement as part of our 50th Anniversary year. The generosity of our founders, Roger and Jean Robinson provided the majority of the endowment capital for the first 50-years, and now it is our turn to provide the same for the next 50.

While we are growing the endowment in 2022, this is an excerpt of what we will also be doing: (click on the links to learn more of what we've done):

Numerous events for the Willard 50th Anniversary
Bringing musical performers to our [2022 Music Series](#)
Support our spring children's programming and [family events](#)
Champion our May *Horology In Art* Exhibit
Expand our funding for clock conservation work
Establish our paid internship program
Grow our [Plein Air Series](#)
Hire [Go Go Goat Mowers](#) again this year
Continue with our regular tours
Carry on mentorship
Create ongoing education programs for school children

Please join us in our most important effort in 50-years, growing the Willard House and Clock Museum endowment to ensure guaranteed sustainability for the future.

Your contribution, large or small is greatly appreciated, and of course, I appreciate your help in the past.

With deepest gratitude, I am sincerely yours,



[Help Us Reach Our Fundraising Goal](#)

Library Update

Willard House is Gifted an Intriguing and Rare Find

I LOVE BOOKS!

A recent donation to the museum included 51 books on horology, a grand total of 126 pounds! It is no surprise that I was thrilled with the donation, despite my promised gift of over 5,000



books (including my research files), a fraction of which currently fills my office and bathroom(!) book shelves, others linger neatly boxed in the barn and still more at my new home in S. Grafton. All are destined for Willard.

While all of the books in the recent donation are duplicates of my promised collection, they add to the number presently in the museum library, pointing to be the basis of a future lending library of horological material for members.

Through the years, I've known many of the authors of these books and my own signed copies bring back years of memories spending time with the outstanding horological authors of the 20th and 21st centuries in America and abroad. I

continue to buy and read the latest tomes as they are published, and with the advances in photography and printing they are eye-candy for the horologist.

The National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors has recently renamed their research library: "Fortunat Mueller-Maerki Library and Research Center" in honor of the volunteer contributions of Fortunat in the acquisition, care and custody of this major horological research library. He also recently donated his personal library of over 20,000 volumes to the Horological Society of New York (hs-ny.org) making it the only research library of its type in NYC. Now he really loves books!

If you love or even like books, keep an eye on our website [SHOP](#) tab. See titles by present scholars on our board, Gary R. Sullivan, Paul J. Foley, former board members, Herschel Burt, John C. Losch, and your executive director, RCC.

If you need any help or guidance from me on this subject, don't hesitate contact me at: Robert@WillardHouse.org

RCC

P.S. I don't help moving books!

Special Exhibit Coming To Willard House *Horology In Art*

May 15th to June 25th

Willard House is pleased to announce its first exhibit in nearly ten years.

On loan from the Horological Society of New York Exhibit Curator, Bob Frishman, *Horology In Art* features over 60 examples of clocks, timepieces and watches integrated into artwork.

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. Can you find the horology?



Iconic artists represented in the exhibit's prints include Salvador Dali, Jan Steen, Andrew Wyeth, Winslow Homer, and Giovanni Piranesi. Vintage photographs include two rare mid-19th century daguerreotypes, cabinet cards, cartes de visites, glass lantern slides, and several examples of Mathew Brady Civil-War-era portraits, whose subjects share the scene with his studio's "Reaper" figural mantel clock.

This will be a fun and interactive exhibits for families and children as they will asked to, "spot the clock (or timepiece or watch) in the assorted works.

Reading Corner -Featured Website-



I came upon the website of the [Historical Society of Early American Decoration](http://hsead.org) (hsead.org). This organization overlaps very closely with clocks! Under their Decorative Arts tab are excellent instructional videos demonstrating [how to paint tall clock dials](#) and reverse paintings on glass commonly found on Patent Timepieces or "banjo" clocks. If you want a cool new hobby, this may be it!

[Watch The Videos On Reverse Glass Painting](#)

Research Corner

Paul J. Foley

Fire at Willard & Son Back - Congress Street

TRAVELLER'S BUILDING



In the Fall issue of *The Pendulum*, we documented contemporary newspaper accounts of a daring 1862 burglary of Simon Willard Jr.'s (1795-1874) watch and chronometer business at No. 9 Congress Street in downtown Boston, located on the first floor of the four-story *Boston Traveller* Newspaper building. Two thieves managed to break into Simon's store after hours and took \$7,000 worth of watches and chronometers. They tried to escape by train to New York City but were caught by police enroute and all the stolen goods were recovered.

Fire Nearly Destroys Traveller Building

However, that was not the only adversity Simon Jr.'s business would suffer on Congress Street. On January 2, 1865, the *Traveller* building was almost completely destroyed by a deliberately set fire causing considerable damage to Simon Jr.'s business.

About 5 o'clock on Monday morning January 2, 1865, fire was discovered issuing from the *Traveller* Building, corner of State and

Congress Streets, and the flames rapidly spread, extending more or less throughout the second, third and fourth stories, while the ground story and the basement were thoroughly flooded with water. An alarm was given and the Fire Department steamers were quickly on site but somewhat hampered in their efforts by the extreme cold winter weather and the intricate construction of the building with its numerous and crooked stairways and entries. The *Traveller* newspaper sustained the principal loss among the numerous tenants of the building. Their printing office, located in the fourth floor was invaded by flames, and considerable type and other materials were destroyed, together with the editorial and reporters' rooms.

The printing presses, steam engine, &c., in the basement, were thoroughly wet down, but were otherwise believed to be uninjured. The workmen in different departments hurriedly engaged in "putting things to rights," and an edition of the *Traveller* was issued later that afternoon printed on the *Boston Journal's* press.

The store of Simon Willard & Son, in the south end of the building on Congress Street, was drenched with water, though their valuable stock of chronometers and watches was not seriously damaged. Some were secured in safes and part of the stock was safely removed by police at an early stage of the fire. The refreshment saloon of E. Gottschalk adjoining, and the counting room of the *Traveller* and the office of the American Telegraph Co., in the front part of the ground floor, were badly damaged by the torrents of water pouring through the building.

The proprietors of the *Traveller* had insurance believed to fully cover their losses. The block thus partially burned comprises a granite building fronting on State Street and a brick building adjoining on Congress Street and Square. A portion of both roofs were destroyed, and most of the windows broken out, but the walls were apparently not damaged too much. The building's owner was also insured and decided to renovate rather than tear down and rebuild.

The fire was evidently caused by an incendiary, the marks of whose operations were discovered in three different places by police and others in examining the premises. A man was seen coming out of the central door on Congress Square about half an hour before the fire broke out. (*Boston Evening Transcript*, January 2, 1865; *Boston Morning Journal*, January 3, 1865; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, January 3, 1865)

In the rear part of the building were the files of the *Traveller*, some of them ancient, running back forty years. Some of these were to have been presented to the Public Library, but they were destroyed. (*Boston Herald*, January 3, 1865) Although the presumed target of the arsonist was the *Traveller* Newspaper and offices, no suspect was ever identified or prosecuted.

A CARD. S. WILLARD & SON tender their thanks to the Police and Fire Departments of Boston, for their successful exertions in protecting and saving their property during the disastrous fire in the Traveller Buildings, Jan. 2. Boston, Jan. 3, 1865. No. 9, Congress street. It

Two days later, on January 4, 1865, Simon published his thanks in the *Boston Herald* to the Police and Fire Departments for saving his property during the fire

The next day, January 5, 1865, Simon was advertising in the *Boston Evening Transcript* for local office space to rent.

Simon Willard & Son Back Open For Business

Five months after the fire the *Traveller's* Building had been reconstructed and in June 1865 Simon Willard & Son advertised in the *Boston Evening Transcript* their refitted and enlarged premises and were prepared to do business again:

S. WILLARD & SON,
Would respectfully inform their friends and the public that they have

**Refitted and Enlarged their Premises,
No. 9 Congress street,**

Lately damaged by the destruction of the Traveller Buildings by fire, and are now prepared to resume the business of

IMPORTING AND SELLING
CHRONOMETERS AND WATCHES,

With every convenience and facility which their long experience has suggested.
They would particularly invite attention to their

NEW AND BEAUTIFUL ASSORTMENT OF
WATCHES
of Recent Importations.

AT THE OLD STAND,
No. 9 Congress street, Boston.

4w Je 12

Boston Evening Transcript - JUNE 19, 1865

On June 13, 1865, the *Boston Post* informed the public of the re-opening of Simon Willard & Son's business six months after the fire with a glowing report on the refitted and enlarged premises and top quality of the merchandise they carried:

June 13, 1865 Boston Post Article

Willard & Son's New Establishment. – Simon Willard & Son – a firm familiar to nearly all Boston people – yesterday re-opened their new establishment, No. 5 Congress street. We characterize it as new, although located on the old site. Since the fire which caused a sudden removal from the premises, the building has been substantially reconstructed. With this improvement the Messrs Willard have kept well in pace, and have now one of the very best establishments of its kind in the city. The store has the advantage of three sides of the building, which affords the most ample light. It has been fitted in the most appropriate manner, and evidently with no grudging as to expense. The prevailing wood-work is black walnut, and the floor is laid in hard maple. The counters are of white marble, with walnut tops, and these are ornamented with handsome silver-mounted show-cases. The latter are of course filled with watches and other goods so long kept by the firm. The arrangement of the cases, in which are placed the chronometers, is noticeable for its system and great convenience. The instrument which it may be desired to see or procure is readily distinguished from others. The disposition of counters and the general arrangement of the store is excellent. The store is fire-proof, so that should a conflagration break out either below or adjoining, the flames would not penetrate in the least. The features of the business of the Mssrs Willards are *Chronometer and Watches*, and none but the best are ever dealt in. They are agents for the celebrated Frodsham watches, and also some of the best manufacturers. We need hardly add that whoever purchases here is sure of articles of the most perfect character. The Mssrs Willard, it is interesting to state, have occupied the present site for *thirty-eight years!* The firm is probably the oldest on the street. The family name has been in the same business in Boston – and all relatives – for now upwards of a hundred years. The Willards are doubtless somewhat attached to the watch trade. The present firm enjoys the confidence of not only the people of our own city, but of many parts of the country. Fair, courteous and honorable in their dealings they could not fail to win a high reputation.

Events

WHCM Music Series



April 30

WHCM Plein Air Series



Plein air painting by C Nixon

Grain Thief

Back for 2022
Timeless Americana Music

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

[Watch Grain Thief Video](#)



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

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Willard House & Clock Museum

-The Center of Early American Clockmaking-

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