

HOROLOGICAL TOUR OF PHILADELPHIA

by James W. Gibbs

(Part IV — Conclusion)

No catalogue of the city's finest clocks would be complete without mention of the superlative specimens at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Unlike most museums the clocks here are not all gathered in one location like so many wooden soldiers. Rather they are scattered throughout the vast building taking their unobtrusive but vital part in period room displays. This Museum is also unique in that it keeps almost all display clocks running. The visitor must be prepared to do a lot of walking but the effort will be vastly rewarding.

Listed here are some of the choice pieces which make that foot-pounding worthwhile.

*In Decorative Art Galleries,
First Floor, Sections 1 and 2:*

B. Harbeson, copper sun dial, circular, Roman numerals, gnomon projecting from center of circle in which the points of the compass are indicated. Opposite the numeral XII is inscribed "I D 1763" with a crescent on either side.

John Wood, advertised in Philadelphia 1760-93, mahogany tall case clock; hood has canopy top with brass decoration; square brass face with silver chapter ring and scroll and crown design spandrels; with maker's name engraved on silver disc above dial; case possibly by celebrated furniture maker, William Savery.

Joseph Wells, at work in Philadelphia 1725-59, tall case clock.

Dubac, circa 1780-1819, Paris, ormolu mantel clock, figure of George Washington standing on a rectangular

base with ball feet. His arm rests on top of clock which is surmounted by an eagle; engraved on pedestal "E Pluribus Unum." Beneath white enamel face the inscription "Washington — The First in War, First in Peace, and in His Countrymen's Hearts."

Jean Louis Rouviere, 1781-9, Paris. Late Louis XVI style mantel clock in form of gray marble obelisk and circular plinths which support two ormolu spires with three volute feet which are surmounted by ormolu eagles with chains in beaks. White marble base; porcelain dial; sunburst pendulum bob; swags of chain ormolu.

Unsigned, early 19th century French mantel clock, ormolu, lyre shape supported on rectangular base; simulated lyre consists of four round columns with flame finials. Crossbar at top surmounted by bust of laurel-wreathed Apollo.

Francis Richardson, Jr., at work 1710-29, Philadelphia. Walnut tall case clock, first half 18th century, flat moulded top, brass columns at corners, brass dial. Inscribed "Francis Richardson, Philad a Fecit."

Peter Stretch, at work Philadelphia 1702-46. Mahogany 83" tall case clock; plain moulded hood with columns at sides; brass dial with maker's name engraved; one hand; insert for day of month.

*In Fashion Wing,
First Floor, Section 1:*

Unsigned, circa 1800, Regensburg, Germany. Watch, verge escapement with fusee, white enamel dial, black

Arabic numerals, steel hands, white enamel skull case.

*In Galleries of European Art,
Second Floor, Section 5:*

Unsigned, 16th century high Renaissance. German brass table clock, octagonal base resting on eight minute legs. The base conceals one large bell which strikes the hour; above the tower is a gallery concealing a smaller bell which strikes the last hour after the smallest bell (forming canopy above the figures) strikes the quarters. There are two dials, one front, one back. Front one is marked with hours and outside are marked with four quarters which are indicated by a hand which moves around in an hour but independently of hour hand. The chasing of the case is a floral design and around the tower shows signs of having been well enamelled. The top is supported by scrolled figures and is crowned with many points. Movement bears the initials V.M. in a shield.

Unsigned, 16th century French. Table clock of hexagonal shape of engraved copper decorated with Arabesques and interlacings; surmounted with a small semi-perforated cupola. The engraved dial is on the summit of the cupola. Under the base are arranged a sun dial and compass. This clock is enclosed in a case of the same period, bronze Morocco ornamented with iron with a hinged cover to expose the dial.

Samuel Franse, 17th century, Holland, Zaandam Clock. Brass trimmings, large gong at top surmounted by Atlas bearing on his shoulders a black wooden ball representing the universe decorated with gold stars, moons, etc. On either side of the top are two lions supporting a shield between them and the words "NU ELK SYN SIN." In front are figures of Faith, Hope and Charity. Four brass weights in the shape of pears, all different sizes. The pendulum bob is a brass figure of a man on horseback.

Jean Baptiste Paillard, circa 1750, Paris, mantel clock (case by Jean Joseph) surmounted by cherub in

flowing veil holding wreath, all supported by winged dragon standing on leaves and rocks. Entire case and figures together with embellishing leaves, flowers, scrolls, etc., are of ormolu.

Louis Montjoye, mid-18th century, Paris. Louis XVI style shelf clock, case formed by part of fluted column made of Sevres porcelain glazed in turquoise blue with flutes of white. At left stands figure of Venus holding frame with memorial miniature frame resting on top of column reading "L'Amite les uni" (friendship unites them). At right of column is figure of Cupid playing with dog. All figures of ormolu; ormolu garland around dial. Columns and figures stand on marble base with four feet and enrichment of ormolu. Dial white with painted numerals and tiny floral decorations. Hands studded with brilliants.

Unsigned, French circa 1780, Louis XVI style, brass and marble revolving urn clock encased in red porphyry vase with ormolu mounts in Neo-Grecian style of period. The helmet and shield of Athena with the Medusa head lie beside Cupid.

Daniel Binny, 1747-79, Edinburgh, long case clock, veneered, burlled and inlaid walnut; hood has domed top and brass capitals and bases on columns at corners. Brass and steel face has raised gilded decoration of peacocks.

Henry Batterson, at work 1701-11, London. 95" long case clock, walnut veneer. Fret work decoration on hood, two gilded finials. Brass and steel face with crown finials.

John Holmes, at work 1763-1810, London. Long case clock, mahogany; openwork cresting on hood; chiming bells.

Thomas Deykin, circa 1710-50, Worcester. Long case clock.

Daniel Quare, at work 1671-1724, London. Twelve month long case clock in Marquetry case. Subsidiary discs in upper corners of dial; right — twelve month calendar; left — engraved "Tempus aequal" and "Tempus apparens." Main dial can be adjusted to show mean or solar time

by setting pointer. Maker's name engraved at bottom of dial. Formerly in Wetherfield collection.

Christopher Gould, at work 1682-1718, London. Marquetry long case clock. Maker's name engraved at base of dial; brass cherub head spandrels; seconds dial in upper and day of month aperture in lower parts of dial. "Silent" and "Strike" engraved at top of dial. Brass ball finials.

Thomas Moore, 1720-89, Ipswich. Bracket clock, ebony case with ormolu handle, feet, four pineapple finials, four pilasters incorporating female heads. Brass and steel dial, maker's name engraved. Above dial a painting of four figures around a harpsichord. Conversation piece in style of Hogarth. Back plate engraved in rocaille Chippendale style. Glass on four sides.

Jacob Hostetter, Hanover, Pennsylvania, 1785-1825; New Lisbon, Ohio, to 1831. Long case clock.

Simon Willard, 1753-1848, Massachusetts. Tall mahogany case clock. White dial and calendar attachment; brass finials; chamfered corners of case inlaid with brass rods; bracket feet. On inside of door is posted an original advertisement such as was used by Simon Willard. Inlaid lines on the case.

*Displayed outside the Museum
At Cedar Grove, Fairmount Park:*

Simon Willard, shelf clock, pine case, rectangular base, hinged four panel doors closing on side with a hook; square hood, circular dial with both Roman and Arabic numerals. The dial bears the following:

- (1) Latin inscription "Sic hoc momento pendet alternitas") (At this moment hangs eternity)
- (2) Made and warranted for Dr. Dix
- (3) Simon Willard fecit

Benjamin Reeves, at work circa 1760-1801, Philadelphia and Greenwich, N.J. Tall case clock. Walnut. Brass dial, silvered, with black numerals, ca. 1775.

At Germantown Historical Society:

John Taylor, early 18th century, London. Mantel or bracket clock; rectangular with brass mounts; ball and claw feet; dial ornamented with brass scroll. Eight day calendar clock.

*At Hill-Physick-Keith House,
321 South Fourth Street:*

Dubac, early 19th century, French Empire style mantel clock featuring figure of Washington. Maker noted for exports to America.

At Lemon Hill, Fairmount Park:

Unsigned, late 19th century, French. Black wooden Empire style shelf clock. Capitals of columns, bases, scroll work, works, dial and pendulum are brass.

*At Powell House,
244 South Third Street:*

Unsigned, Sheraton period. Mahogany tall case clock, scroll top and broken pediment; brass finial and rosettes.

*At Strawberry Mansion,
Fairmount Park:*

Unsigned, circa 1810 Empire style French, bronze gilt striking mantel clock on oblong base with grape leaf moulding; vase of flowers in a wreath on either side of a panel with amorpine playing musical instruments in relief on stippled ground forms plinth; bracket feet; drum-shaped dial flanked by standing figure of Bacchus on one side and an urn on a column on the other side with trophy and victor's wreath.

At Sweetbriar, Fairmount Park:

Simon Willard, banjo timepiece, gilt and painted; round white face topped by brass finial; square base with gilt and painted doors; panel of gilt and painted glass between face and base.

Not on display at present:

Unsigned, late 18th century, Japanese wall clock. Long wooden case with long brass plate with hour numerals in Japanese characters. Omitting a lengthy museum description, this is the well-known stick clock.

John Ebsworth, at work 1665-1703, London. Long case clock, oak case with walnut veneer; oyster-piece and inlaid parquetry; flat ball feet; bull's eye glass in door; hood has four twisted columns and frieze of metal in low relief; brass face with cherub head spandrels.

John Knibb, last quarter 17th century, Oxford. Lantern or bracket clock; plain dial; slightly rounded sides; one hand; sides show cherub heads in raised work. At top, front and both sides, fret-work ornamented with crossed dolphins, enclosing large bell. Uses two weights because of alarum attachment.

Koenradt Hech, early 19th century, Amsterdam. Eight-day tall case clock with satinwood inlay in flower design; door has oval brass ormolu ornament with glass in back so that pendulum bob is visible. Top of case has three carved wood gilt figures representing Mercury in center and Fame and Victory on each side. Brass movement. Brass dial with ormolu spandrels representing the four seasons.

Unsigned, early 19th century, French Empire style clock with orrery on three ormolu pillars with woman's head capitals; central marble post; octagonal marble base on three feet rectangular stand containing music box.

John Hagey, at work circa 1820 in Philadelphia and Germantown. Shelf clock. Metal dial painted white with black Roman numerals and floral design in colors in spandrels.

Hendrik B. Negedinger, circa 1780, Amsterdam. 98" tall case clock; broken curved pediment and three carved wood finials; two columns either side of clock face, carved frieze above. Waist has attached columns at front corners.

G. J. Levy, Paris, Second Empire, gilt rococo clock, Bacchante riding

goat on pedestal trimmed with fruit; clock dial inside pedestal.

Unsigned, late 19th century eight-day striking and repeater bracket clock. Ebonized wood case with rosette decoration on side panels. Dial and medallions in blue jasper ware, perforated brass door on back.

Seth Thomas, 1785-1859, Connecticut. Mahogany pillar and scroll clock, scroll top, 3 finials, slender columns on each side, bracket feet, painted face and tablet.

Lepaute, last half 18th century, Paris, Louis XVI style mantel clock mounted on grey marble and ormolu base; marble decorated with three painted scenes of nymphs; ormolu has designs of scrolls and two panels in low relief of nymphs; surmounted by bronze figure of cherub reading a book; ormolu cockerel perched on another book and scroll beside cherub.

Galle, circa 1808, Paris, Empire style mantel bronze and ormolu drum clock set upon a boat with swan-neck figure heads at prow and stem. Ormolu figure of Chronos, winged and holding a scythe, seated to left of clock. Ormolu winged youth with paddle stands to right. Ormolu water on top of oval pedestal which has ormolu webbed duck feet. White enamel face.

Gaston Jolly, early 19th century, Paris, round ormolu mantel clock with round enamel dial, whole resting on oval base ornamented with low relief four feet. Apollo, holding lyre, sits atop the clock.

James Boyce, at work 1692-1712, London. Bracket clock. Ebony case with silver mounts. Curved slit in dial to reveal mock pendulum. Maker's name engraved on dial and back plate.

John Marten, at work 1679-1701, London. Bracket clock, inlaid satinwood case. Curved slit in dial to show mock pendulum.

If this outline of various clocks in downtown Philadelphia has proved interesting, let it be remembered that the concept was that of George H. Eckhardt and this has been executed, on the occasion of NAWCC's Silver Anniversary Convention, in his memory.