

To Restore or Not to Restore, That is the Question

By

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Purpose and Scope

- To help you decide what to do with your latest acquisition
- While this may apply to many objects, we will be talking mostly about clocks

Your Options

- Preserve
- Conserve
- Restore
- Leave as Found

Preserve

- Keep the object in it's present state, protect from further deterioration in a secure, climate controlled environment. This would apply to a very rare, irreplaceable item. In practical terms, seal in a plastic bag with desiccant and lock in a dark room.

Example

Conserve

- Stabilize the object to stop or slow down further deterioration but display or use as desired. Maintain original condition as much as possible.
- For clocks, this could mean cleaning, veneer repairs, label repair and protection, movement repairs, etc. The original finish would be maintained.

Example

1825 Silas Hoadley Pillar & Scroll



Restore

- Return the object to it's original condition
- For clocks, this might include stripping off the old finish, re-veneering, making or replacing parts, stenciling, faux painting, etc.

Example

1891 Gilbert "Citizen" 8-Day Gingerbread Clock - Before



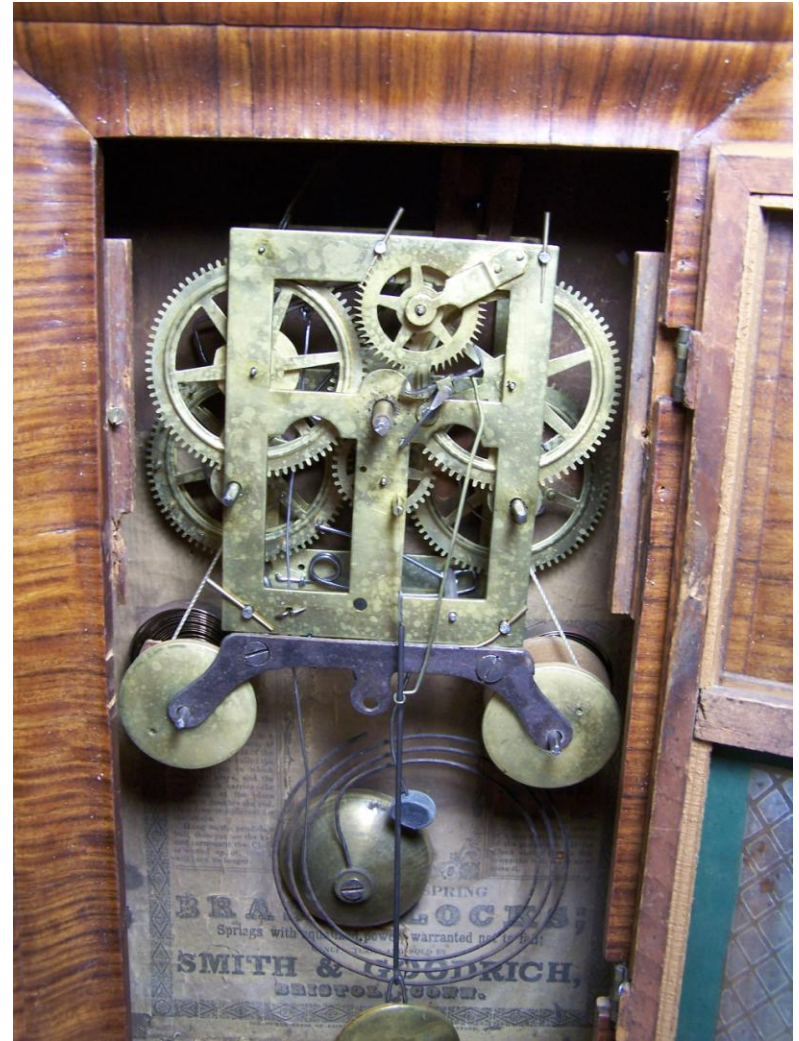
After



Leave as Found

- A popular choice today given many years of watching “Antiques Roadshow” or “American Pickers”.
- A high value is placed on originality, especially when it comes to original finish.
- Doesn't consider future deterioration.
- Requires you to evaluate how original the object really is i.e. has it been restored?

c.1850 Smith & Goodrich – As Found



First Step - Evaluate

- Condition?
- Is it all there?
- Original finish?
- Do all the parts belong to this clock i.e. not a marriage?
- Is it too far gone to bring back?

CLOCK INFORMATION SHEET

MANUFACTURER / TYPE / MODEL:

DIMENSIONS:

DATE PRODUCED:

DATE OBTAINED / FROM:

COST:

DESCRIPTION:

STRIKE/CHIME:

CONDITION:

- CASE:
- FACE/HANDS/DIAL/GLASS:
- LABEL:
- KEY:
- MOVEMENT:
- OTHER:

REPAIRS MADE/COST:

DATE COMPLETED:

Step 2 – Make a Plan

- What level are you going for?
- What will be done?
- Materials/tools needed?
- Who will do the work?
- Other resources: Classes, Books, You Tube, NAWCC Forum, Internet, Colleagues?

Materials/Tools

- For restorations, a good rule is to try to do things the way they were done when this clock was made.
- Use hide glue ilo modern PVA glues, especially for veneer.
- Use old veneer when possible. Some wood species are no longer available.
- Consider shellac for the top coat or an antique oil finish.

- For labels, use wheat wallpaper paste to re-attach.
- Test the label for acid and neutralize if necessary. Cover with acid free mylar.
- You can learn how to stencil, repaint clock dials, reverse paint on glass, etc, or there are people you can hire for those skills.
- Don't be afraid to think outside the box if antique methods fail you. Today we have lasers, 3D printers, CNC machines and other tools that might solve a problem.

Step 5 – Implement the Plan

Step 6 – Evaluate the Results

Step 7 – Document the Project

Take lots of pictures, before and after.

Keep track of how much money and time spent using the previously shown sheet.

1905 Ingraham Black Mantle “Erna”



As Found

C 1825 H. Blakeslee Woodworks



Conserved

1863 Seth Thomas Column Rosewood - Restored



1852 Upson Bros. Cottage



Restored using Modern Technology