

Alarm Clock Newsletter

The Alarm Clock goes to War

THE ALARM CLOCK CHAPTER WILL PUBLISH LATER ON THIS YEAR "FRIST AID FOR AILING WESTCLOXS" FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE 1920 BY THE WESTCLOCK COMPANY FOR THE TRADE.

I first became aware of the "Waralarm" by Westclox a few years ago shortly after I began to collect alarm clocks. One of the things that struck me was the relatively low cost of some very good examples. When you consider that the Waralarm was only in production from April of 1943 to May of 1944 (See John Stoddard's email reply next page) a mere 13 months and made so cheaply, it's a wonder that any of them are still around. It has to be one of the shortest production runs for any alarm clock ever made. In that 13-month production run they made at least 3 different models .



I purchased my first one on Ebay for less than \$20.00; it is an early fiber case model with a paper Office of Price Administration (OPA) label and slight case damage & a yellow dial. (See Photos) The next one I picked up for a whopping \$10.00 was perfect! (See photos next page) It is a later model with the embossed OPA label and "Buzzer" Alarm. I was astounded that such a perfect alarm clock, that had such cross-collecting desirability, would go so cheap. Then a metal case Waralarm came up on Ebay and of course I had to have it to complete the collection. Again I paid a small amount for it, as I remember around \$20.00.

Then I found out that there was an East coast version, made in Winsted, Connecticut by Gilbert (See

Special points of interest:

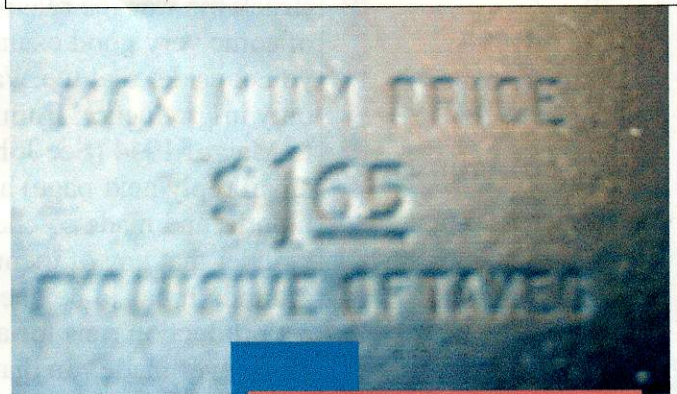
- A new Feature starting this month— the MART — place a want ad or sell your old alarm clock . see page 8
- July 31, 1942 - All non-war production ceased
- April 1943: Fiber case Waralarm introduced.
- Sometime late 1943 or early 1944: Metal case Waralarm introduced
- May 1944 : Waralarm discontinued



War Alarm Clock (continues)



I am currently researching the "War Alarm" for an article in the Alarm Clock Chapter newsletter. I think that these are one of the most under-valued alarm clocks around. The government was so concerned about their production that it allowed 3 very important war supply companies to produce them for the military & general public. I have 5 different



photos next page) and also an electric War Alarm model made by Telechron. Of course I had to get both the metal & fiber case models and the electric model to round out my collection. I found out that not all of the War Alarms come cheap; I have been trying to get a good example of the Telechron War Alarm for two years now and have been out bid twice by significant amounts. Both times the electric War Alarms, in good condition, have gone for over \$100.00 and a poor example cost me over \$40.00.

My interest was again picked when Richard C. Tjarks answered a question in December's "Answer Box" in the Bulletin, Vol. 43, No. # 335 page 806. I emailed Bill Stoddard (see below) for more information on the "Waralarm". If you want to know anything about Westclox, Bill Stoddard at clockhistory.com is the man.

Hi Bill

Notice that the Dial on the later Fiber Case "Waralarm" doesn't have the "Made in La Salle Ill. U.S.A." printed at the bottom.

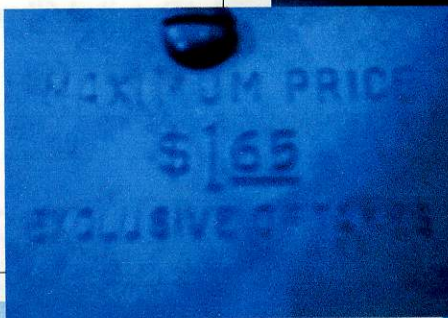


The War Alarm (continues)

models of "War Alarm", 2 Westclox's, 2 Gilbert's & a Telechron. I have 2 paper-case Westclox's, one with an embossed OPA statement case and one with a color decal of the OPA statement. The decal model is the earliest. One question I do have is about the dating of the pressed paper case versus the metal case. I have read several references in the Bulletin that puts the paper case before the metal case. It would seem to me, with the rationing system imposed during the war, that the order of production would be reversed, metal then paper. Also what pre-war model was the "War Alarm" based on. I currently have a 30's (?) "Bingo" that is identical to the "War Alarm". Any information you could provide would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks & Regards Kim"

Bill replied "HI Kim,



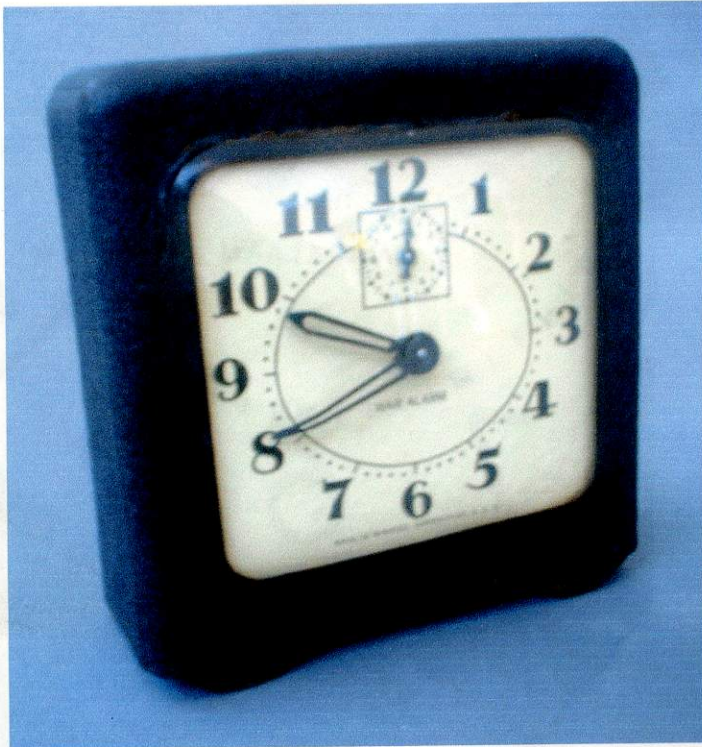
"WESTCLOX is now making plans to produce a Waralarm, a conservation model alarm clock, the production of which was requested a short time ago by the War Production Board. _.."

The write-up by my friend Richard Tjarks in the answer-box in the December 2001 Bulletin (page 806) summarizes our current thinking about the Waralarm. We believe the metal case Waralarm came after the cardboard cased model, based on the following article in the April 1943 Westclox Tick Talk:

"WESTCLOX is now making plans to produce a Waralarm, a conservation model alarm clock, the production of which was requested a short time ago by the War Production Board.

In this model the W.P.B. specifies the use of but 7 pounds of brass for every 1000 clocks, whereas in normal production we use 300 pounds for every 1000 clocks. We have found suitable sub-





the alarm hammer strikes an extension of the trip spring, making a bell not necessary (referred to above and below as the "buzzer" alarm).

Brief Chronology:

The Bingo that was introduced in 1936* appears to be the same case used for the metal case Waralarm, except for the difference in alarm shut-off. The Bingo was out of production during the war (along with other non-war production) starting July 31, 1942. The Waralarm was introduced around April 1943. It was first made in a molded wood fiber case, then the metal case. The Waralarm was discontinued in May 1944*. The "Raven" in the same (metal) case was introduced Sept. 21, 1944*+, and discontinued in January 1947*. The Bingo was re-introduced Sept. 25, 1947*.

Detailed Chronology:

July 31, 1942 - All non-war production ceased

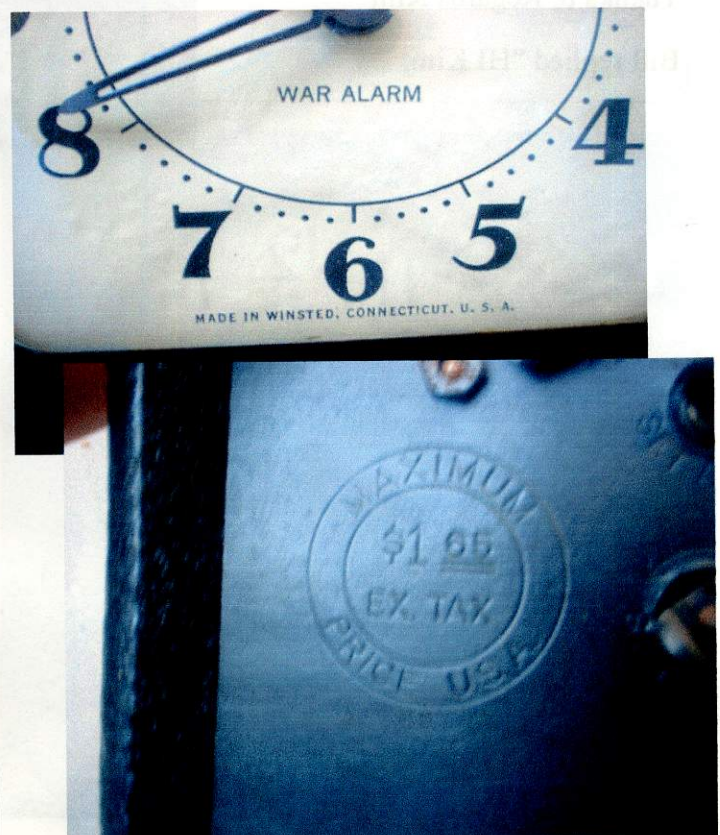
stitutes for the restricted metals.

Despite the difficulties, we believe the clock is pleasing in appearance, and will be readily acceptable by the buying public.

It has a case of molded wood fiber, which will be lacquered. It stands 5 5/8 inches high, and is 5 1/4 inches wide, with a large, easy to read dial. It has a bell alarm, but plans call for the eventual use of a buzzer.

The clock will be assembled in the Four Inch Assembling, and finished in the Four Inch Finishing."

The Waralarm, and other inexpensive West-clox clocks, use the "model 66" movement. Max Schlenker's patent, applied for on Sept. 4, 1943 and issued on Oct. 17, 1944, #2,360,589 describes a cheaper version of the model 66 movement, in which



The War Alarm (continues)

Ca. April 1943: Fiber case Waralarm introduced.

1) Early fiber case examples have BELL alarm and the \$1.65 information is on a sticker, not imprinted on the case. Case back NOT marked "Pad Pdg". I have one example of this, with an off-white rectangular sticker on the back of the case with the \$1.65 information. On my example, the front movement plate is brass, and the back plate is steel!

2) Slightly later fiber case examples have BUZZER alarm, and have the \$1.65 price information imprinted on the back. Case back NOT marked "Pad Pdg". I have one example of this.

3) Later fiber case examples - have the \$1.65 price information imprinted on the back. Case back IS marked "Pad Pdg" The patent was applied for on Sept. 4, 1943, so these were made after this date. My three examples have the buzzer alarm.

Sometime late 1943 or early 1944: Metal case Waralarm introduced (and the fiber case model probably discontinued). My three examples (2 black, one ivory) have "Pat Pdg" on the back of the case, and they all have the bell alarm.

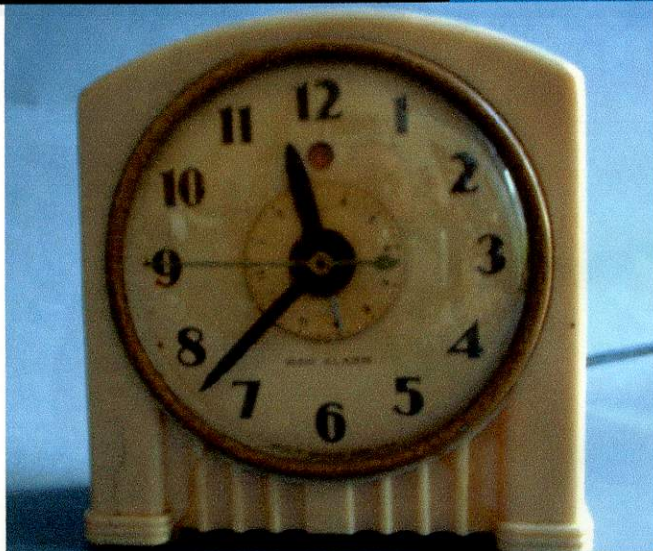
May 1944* : Waralarm discontinued

Sept. 21, 1944*+: Raven introduced (in same metal case as Waralarm, painted black)

I have 3 examples of Raven, all in black cases and having the \$1.65 information imprinted in the back, and having patent number 2360589 on the back. This patent was issued Oct. 17, 1944. It should be possible to find a very early Raven with "Pat Pdg." on the back, since it went into production before the patent was issued. My Ravens all have the bell alarm.

January 1947* - Raven discontinued





The War Alarm (continues)

Sept. 25, 1947* - Bingo back in production.

*Dates from a Westclox price change book in the possession of Ellworth Danz, former chief stylist at Westclox.

+Sept. 21, 1944 is the first date listed for the Raven, but it is possible it was introduced earlier. The price change book gives dates that prices were established or changed, and gives discontinuation dates.

Note: The Bingo has a top alarm shutoff knob, the Waralarm and Raven have a back shutoff knob.

Kim, maybe you can research the government's material restrictions, and how they were changed with time. There may have been a change that allowed Westclox to start using substantial amounts of steel in the metal cased Waralarm. So perhaps restrictions on steel were removed or relaxed. (Remember the steel pennies made during the war)

It is interesting that Westclox called their clock the "Waralarm" (one word), where the other companies called theirs "War Alarm" (two words).

Other clocks you should be aware of for your article:

The "Baby Ben" Waralarm made in army olive drab color, and ivory. This did not have an OPA price on it, perhaps because it was not for sale to general public. We would like to find out more about this clock. (Did the military buy them to issue to military personnel?)

Telechron had two War Alarm models (1 and 2). They are both illustrated on page 218 of Jim Linz's Telechron book.

If anyone has corrections or additions to the above, please let me or Kim St. Dennis know. Thanks.

Yours truly, Bill"

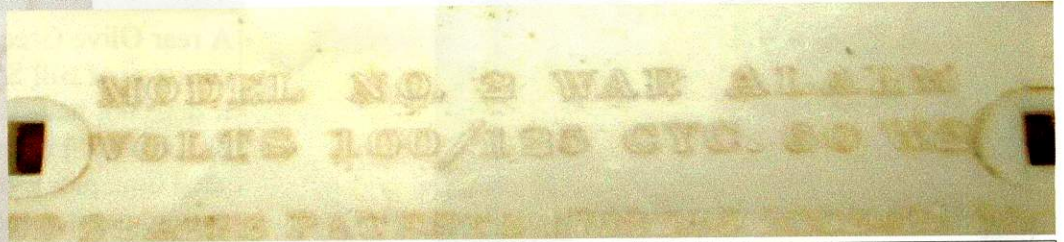
I again contacted Bill with some new info on the Office of Price Administration

"Hi Bill

Something interesting came up in my search of the Library of Congress records for information on the OPA. They have a listing for an outline of a presentation given on April 12th 1944 to the House Banking &



Office of Price Administration
label & model label on the back of the
Telechron War Alarm.



The War Alarm (continues)

Currency Committee by Chester Bowles, administrator OPA, for the renewal of the Price Control Act. Call Number HB236.U5 A53 1944d. It would appear that the act expired sometime in 1944 and most likely when it was renewed, some items were decontrolled, i.e. the Raven & Baby Ben. If I remember my WWII industrial history properly, by 1944 several companies were already planning new product lines for the post-war market.

Most likely the discontinuing of the Waralarm & introduction of the Raven & Baby Ben models was a marketing tool for reentry of Westclox in to the civilian economy. Notice how quickly Westclox discontinued the once priced controlled Raven model after the war.

Regards Kim”

“Hi Kim,
Your idea that Westclox was using the Raven and Baby Ben Waralarm to help get clocks in production again makes sense. The dates of the "Baby Ben" Waralarms I have seen are near the end of the war:

Ivory luminous: 3 1 44

Ivory non-luminous: 6 26 44

Army green: 10 2 44

Army green: 10 10 44

Most of these were made after the date the regular Waralarm

was discontinued (5 44)

I have another army green Baby Ben, but the dial says "Baby Ben" instead of Waralarm, and the movement is dated 4 45. I'm not sure if it is original, or if the movement and dial have been changed.
Yours truly , Bill”

Also as part of the research for this article I read A. Lee Smith's article on Alarm Clocks in June 1995's Bulletin. He mentions that Waterbury tried a plastic escapement in the same paragraph that he outlines the “War Alarms” models. He dose not indicate whether or not they produced a “War Alarm”.

Did Waterbury make a “War Alarm”? Do any of our members have the alleged Waterbury “War Alarm” or a photo of same? We would be happy to include it in a future an article on “War Alarm” Production and unknown models. We also need anyone with the ability to retrieve publication for the Library of Congress to contact us. We are particularly interested in publications from the Office of War Production & Office of Price Administration on the production and pricing of the “War Alarm”.

Alarm Clock Chapter # 178

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A rear Olive Green Baby Ben "Waralarm" courtesy of Bill Stoddard of Bills Clock Work. It does not have the OPA price label imprinted on the back This may have been a military issued time piece, because I believe that the OPA system did not end until after the war was over.



Alarm Clock Chapter # 178

ALARM CLOCK MART

This is a new feature of the our newsletter. This service is free & open to all members of the Alarm Clock Chapter. Contact the Editor at the address or phone number above or email your request to "cstdennis@earthlink.net."

WANTED: Ansonia "Bee" alarm bell assembly & parts for same. Contact: Kim St.Dennis @ (310) 940-1304 or "cstdennis@earthlink.net".

WANTED: Ad for Westclox's "Waralarm" Contact: Contact: Kim St.Dennis @ (310) 940-1304 or "cstdennis@earthlink.net".

WANTED: An original Bob for a Seth Thomas "Grand" Alarm. Contact: Kim St.Dennis @ (310) 940-1304 or "cstdennis@earthlink.net".

WANTED: Front Bezel & Glass for a Seth Thomas "Lodge" Alarm Clock. Contact: Kim St.Dennis @ (310) 940-1304 or "cstdennis@earthlink.net".

SERVICES: Dials for Antique Westclox Alarm Clocks and Timepieces.

Do you repair antique Big Ben, Baby Ben and other Westclox, Western Clock Co. or Western Clock Mfg. Co. clocks? Our exact reproduction dials are just what you need when you have an alarm clock or a timepiece with a bad dial. Our dials are carefully reproduced from original dials. They are professionally printed on slightly off-white coated card stock

similar to original dials, and will make your clock look like it has always been in good condition. We have a complete series of dials for Big Ben leg model (peg leg) alarm clocks (Baby Ben coming soon), and some dials for America, Ben Hur and Sleep Meter alarm clocks as well. Our 4 inch, 3 inch, and 2 inch dials fit some of the earlier clocks with Sept. 22, 1885; Oct. 28, 1902; May 15, 1906; June 9, 1908 or Dec. 15, 1908 patent dates. More dials will be added according to demand.

Warranty and Returns: Our dials are guaranteed to be the highest quality Westclox reproductions available! If you are unsatisfied with your dials, you may return them unused within 24 hours of receipt for a full refund.

CONTACT: Bill Stoddard, Our toll free phone number is 1-888-742-5625, our E-mail address is "dials@ClockHistory.com", and our street address is Bill's Clockworks, 8 W. Columbia St., Flora, Indiana, 46929

We will ship your order as soon as possible (usually within two business days of receiving your order).