

# The Howard Banta Alarm Clock Chapter



Chapter 178 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors

www.acc178.org

2012 Volume 1

## Presidents Message

I know that by the time you read this it will be well past the Holidays but as I write they are rapidly approaching. What a wondrous time of year this is with the excitement of gatherings with family and friends. Even though we can't all possibly meet in person I would like to wish you all a happy Holiday season. May you all have a safe and prosperous New Year.

We have many events scheduled this year as usual in the Clock and Watch community. Of special interest to me is the upcoming 2012 National Convention in Pasadena. The members in my local area have been planning and working on this for the last 18 months. A National Convention is a large commitment for any Chapter or Chapters but I believe the members of Chapter 75 (San Fernando Valley) and Chapter 133 (The West Electrics) are up to the task and with luck and the help of all NAWCC members it promises to be a large success. Pasadena is a great venue with many attractions close to the Convention Center where the event is planned. Information on the Convention can be obtained at the website [www.2012nawccconvention.com](http://www.2012nawccconvention.com). I would encourage each of you if at all possible to attend and bring your family, I'm sure they will have a great time. A meeting of Chapter 178 will be on the schedule.

Of course there are many local events that are offered through out the country and for that matter the World, as we are after all an International organization. Each of these offers an opportunity to interface person to person with other Alarm Clock enthusiast and I do encourage each one of you to attend as many as possible.

Again I wish all of you a prosperous New Year. May each one find that one special watch or clock or other item that you have been looking for to complete your collection.

Bob Linkenhoker

## My Most Unusual and Rare Alarm Clock

By Vince Angell

If you have never seen one of the E.N. Welch "Fire Bug" alarm clocks this might be your only chance. I have been collecting alarm clocks for over 35 year and have only seen one other. I was offered one in 2005 at a price that was not reasonable at that time or even now. It was a nice one and came with its original labeled box and an instruction sheet. Still



E. N. Welch Fire Bug Alarm Clock

too much for my blood.

I check "Alarm Clocks" on eBay on a daily basis and rarely miss seeing anything wonderful. However, a friend of mine happened to email the link to me where this "Fire Bug" was listed. To my

surprise it was a 7 day auction and had already been on for 5 days. I put in a low bid and to my amazement I won the clock.

I can't imagine many of these clocks survived or even the houses that they were used in.



The pictures that were on eBay of the clock were taken from a distance and were very difficult to see all the detail. Besides the dial looking almost destroyed



Match pushed down against flint in striking mode.

Alarm clock with removeable mini-lantern.

it was missing the chimney.

As you can see by my pictures the dial is in pretty good condition. And to my surprise, when I unwrapped the clock the chimney was in the box. As stated, it was not shown in the eBay pictures.

Needless to say, I am very excited about this purchase.

I sent pictures of the clock to a few friends to show my latest purchase. A good friend of mine researched the clock with the Patent Office and found the striking device patent from 1878. The mechanism was patented by Frederick Stephenson in August of 1878.

To work it, you stick a match in the angled holder and push it down until it locks. When the alarm rings the match pops up, strikes and lights the odd looking flint then takes a 1/4 inch turn towards the miniature hurricane lamp and lights it for light in the morning.



When alarm trips, match strikes flint and then rotates to light mini-lantern wick.



# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

FREDERICK G. STEPHENSON, OF PLAINVILLE, CONNECTICUT.

## IMPROVEMENT IN AUTOMATIC LAMP-LIGHTING DEVICES.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **207,317**, dated August 20, 1878; application filed March 22, 1878.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, FREDERICK G. STEPHENSON, of Plainville, in the county of Hartford and State of Connecticut, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Lamp-Lighters, of which the following is a specification:

My invention consists in the peculiar construction of mechanism, and in the combination of parts, both new and old, as hereinafter described.

In the accompanying drawing, Figure 1 is a front elevation of parts of an alarm-clock and a lamp-lighter which embodies my invention. Fig. 2 is a side elevation of the same; and Figs. 3, 4, and 5 are detached views thereof.

A designates an alarm-clock of any ordinary construction. B designates a lamp, firmly secured to the top of the clock-case by means of proper clamps *a a*. One arm of the chimney-holder, by the side of the lamp-burner, is cut away, as shown in Fig. 2, in order to facilitate the application of a match thereto. C designates the frame of the lighter, to which frame a vertically-sliding rod, D, is secured. The upper end of this rod is round and fits in a round bearing in the frame. The lower end, *b*, is flat and twisted a quarter-turn, something like the twist of an auger. This flat and twisted end *b* fits in a thin bearing, *c*, the slot in which corresponds in shape to the transverse area of said twisted end. Said rod is provided with a collar, *d*, rigidly secured thereon, below which and surrounding the rod is a spiral spring, *e*. A lever, E, is hung to the frame C, the lower end of which lever is provided with an offset-arm, *f*, Fig. 2, which, when the rod D is depressed, engages a notch in its lower end, the arm of the lever being held in engagement therewith by the spring *g*, Fig. 2.

A rod or wire, *h*, secured to the lever E, extends into the clock-case, and is so connected to the alarm mechanism that the rod will be pulled to trip the lever E when the alarm is set off. This is accomplished by placing a rotating stop, *i*, on the end of the main or winding shaft of the alarm, so as to engage a swinging lever, *j*, said parts being shown in Figs. 1 and 2, the former figure representing the same with the alarm wound up and before

it has started, while the latter is a detached view, representing said stop and lever just after the alarm has been set off and started.

The stop *i*, of the form shown, and a rotating piece, having a deep notch and circular depression like those in *j*, are old in clock-movements for the purposes of a stop merely. The novelty of these parts, as herein shown, consists in adding a lever to the piece *j*, with an outturned end or other means for connecting it with the rod *h*, so that it shall pull the same. So soon as the alarm starts the arm of the stop *i* throws the lever *j* into the position shown in Fig. 2, when the circular depression, engaging the circular edge of *i*, holds the lever *j* in said position until the parts are again brought into the position shown in Fig. 1 by rewinding the alarm.

Upon the upper end of the rod D is a spring match-holder, F, the same being pivoted within a slot in the end of said rod, so that the holder may be turned down, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2, or turned up, as shown by the detached side and end views, respectively, in Figs. 3 and 4. This holder is made of two pieces of sheet metal, as shown in Fig. 4, and pivoted below the upper end of the rod D a distance greater than the diameter of said rod.

When the holder is in the position shown in Figs. 3 and 4, its sides are withdrawn from the end of the rod D, so that they spring open to facilitate the insertion or removal of a friction-match; but when the holder is turned down, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2, the sides are pressed firmly against the match, to hold it, by reason of the end of the rod embracing the sides of the holder at a point much nearer the match than before, so that the sides cannot spring open to any great extent. One end of the holder may be provided with a stop for the end of the match to rest on.

At one side of the frame C is a hinged arm, G, provided with a curved friction-pad, H, of paste, composition, roughened metal, or any other surface well adapted for igniting matches. This arm G and pad H are forced toward the match-holder by the spring *k*, and are stopped from moving in that direction beyond a certain point by the stop *l* engaging the frame C.

To use the device, the alarm is wound up and set by ordinary means to start or set off



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207,317

the alarm at the desired hour. The match-holder F is turned up, as shown in Fig. 3, and then depressed, with the rod D and spring *e*, until the arm *f* of the lever E engages the notch in the edge and lower end of the rod D, to hold it down. A match is then inserted in the holder, and the latter turned down, with the end of the match resting against the spring-actuated pad H, as most clearly shown in Fig. 2. When the alarm starts, the arm *f* is disengaged, and the spring *e* throws the rod and match-holder upward, the same making a quarter-turn in their upward movement by reason of the twisted end, thereby carrying the match swiftly upward over the pad to ignite it, and turning it around to present its ignited end to the lamp and light the same, as indicated by the broken lines in Fig. 1.

I am aware that lamp-lighters have heretofore been combined with clocks, and I hereby disclaim the same.

I claim as my invention—

1. In combination with the mechanism of a lamp-lighter, the connecting-rod *h*, rotating

stop *i* on the main shaft of the alarm, and the lever *j*, operated by said stop to pull the rod *h* when the alarm starts, substantially as described.

2. In a lamp-lighter, the rod D, carrying the match-holder, said rod being flattened and twisted, whereby it makes a quarter-turn simultaneously with its rising movement, substantially as described, and for the purpose specified.

3. In a lamp-lighter, the match-holder F, formed of two thin plates, and pivoted in the split end of the rod D, substantially as described, and for the purpose specified.

4. The combination of the spring-actuated friction-pad H, holder F, rod D, spring *e*, lever E, and mechanism operated by the alarm-spring to trip said lever at the proper time, substantially as described, and for the purpose specified.

FREDERICK G. STEPHENSON.

Witnesses:


HIRAM V. HARRIS,

W. O. BUNNELL.

Page from 1880 E.N. Welch Catalog

E. N. WELCH MFG. CO'S CLOCKS. 41

FIRE BUG.



Height, 8 inches. 3 inch Dial.

One Day. Lever. Time. Alarm.

Nickel.

This Clock lights the Lamp AUTOMATICALLY at the hour for which the Alarm is set.

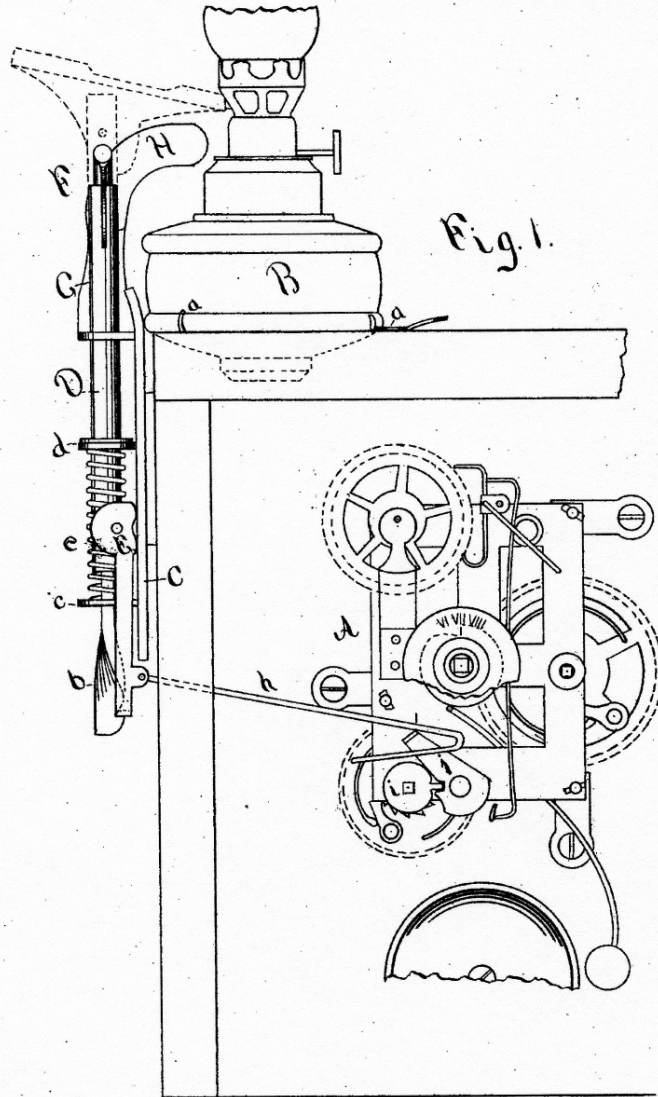


2 Sheets—Sheet 1

F. G. STEPHENSON.  
Automatic Lamp-Lighting Device.

No. 207,317

Patented Aug. 20, 1878



Witnesses:  
*W. B. Thomson.*  
*James P. Thomson.*

Inventor:  
*Frederick G. Stephenson*  
 By *James Shepard Atty.*

M. PETERS, PHOTO-LITHOGRAPHER, WASHINGTON, D. C.



2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

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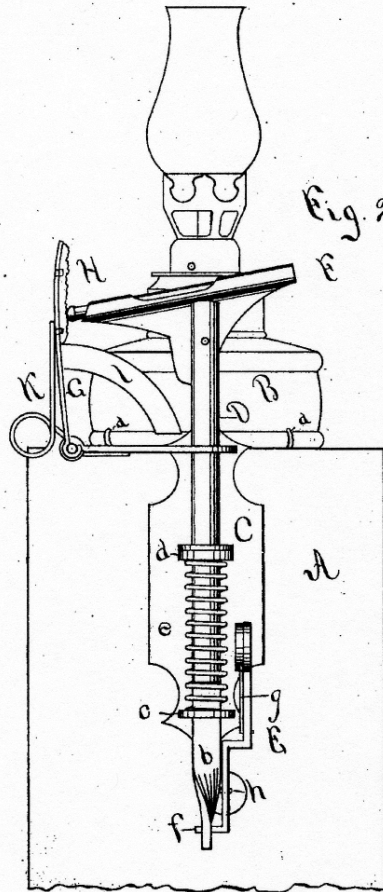


Fig. 3.

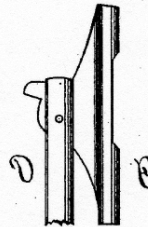
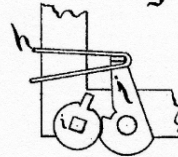


Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



Witnesses  
W. B. Thomson.  
James P. Thomson.

Inventor:  
Frederick S. Stephenson  
By James Shepard atty.

N. PETERS, PHOTO-LITHOGRAPHER, WASHINGTON, D. C.