

The Howard Banta Alarm Clock Chapter



Chapter 178 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors

www.acc178.org

MAY 2014

Volume 3

Presidents' Message

To begin with I wish to apologize for not getting this edition of the Chapter 178 newsletter out sooner. Some medical setbacks have kind of disrupted my schedule but I am getting better now. As a matter fact we (my wife Cora Lee and I) are starting to plan our trip to the National Convention in Milwaukee in June. We are going to try something different this year as we plan to drive our recreational vehicle from California to Wisconsin and live in it instead of staying at a hotel. Time will only tell just how this works out.

As you may already know Diana DeLucca has resigned from the NAWCC staff. She has been the NAWCC's editor since the year 2000 and has done a stellar job, overseeing many upgrades to its publications. We will all miss her and wish her and Ken success in all of their future ventures. I hope they will retain their membership and interest in the NAWCC and that we may see them at future events.

The May/June edition of the Watch and Clock magazine is out and you should have received your copy by the time this newsletter arrives. It has been overseen by our new editor Monica Elbert and I encourage all of you to read her opening statements on the back of the cover page in this edition. I'm sure we all wish her success in this new endeavor. Personally I hope to meet her at the upcoming National Convention.. By the by if you happen to see me at the convention please stop and have a chat. There is no Chapter meeting scheduled this year because the ones in the last few years have seen so few people attend it just didn't seem justified.

One last thing, I know I promised to have pictures and an article on the Westclox Little Ben I have been working on. Well I have finally completed the

repair and the article is on pages 3 to 6 of his newsletter.

Don't forget that your membership fees for 2014 were due in January. Please complete the application at the end of this letter and send it along with \$15 to Mike Wilson.

Till next time
Bob Linkenhoker

IN THIS ISSUE

| | |
|------------|---|
| Page 1 | President's Message |
| Page 2 & 3 | Article and pictures of a unique Penny operated alarm clock |
| Page 3-7 | The Seldom Seen Little Ben |
| Page 8 | Membership Application |

AS ALWAYS I NEED MATERIAL FOR THE NEWSLETTER. IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING THAT WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO OUR MEMBERSHIP PLEASE SEND TEXT AND PICTURES TO rlink3@juno.com.

It is my belief that a chapter such as ours needs to change leadership on a regular basis to survive. With this in mind will someone consider stepping forward and offer to relieve me of the office of President

We are also in need of someone to take over the task of composing the newsletter.

The Penny Alarm Clock

This article and it's related pictures comes to me from our friend and dedicated member Dennis Sagvold:

Enclosed is information and pictures of my coin operated Alarm Clock.

It is a standard Ansonia Legged Alarm Clock with a nickel case, brass ring and brass legs, which were left on even though the clock sets in another solid base.

The case dimensions are: 10 inches high to top of ring, 6 5/8 inches wide, 2 1/8 inches deep. It has a standard Ansonia 3 1/4 inch dial with the Ansonia Trademark above the 6 o'clock position and 'Manufactured by the Ansonia Clock Co. New York, United States of America' outside the time track at the 6:00 o'clock position.

Mounted in the base is a 3 inch by 2 1/4 inch door in front with a combination lock on it.

I would date this as late 1880's to 1900.

The operation of the clock is thus:

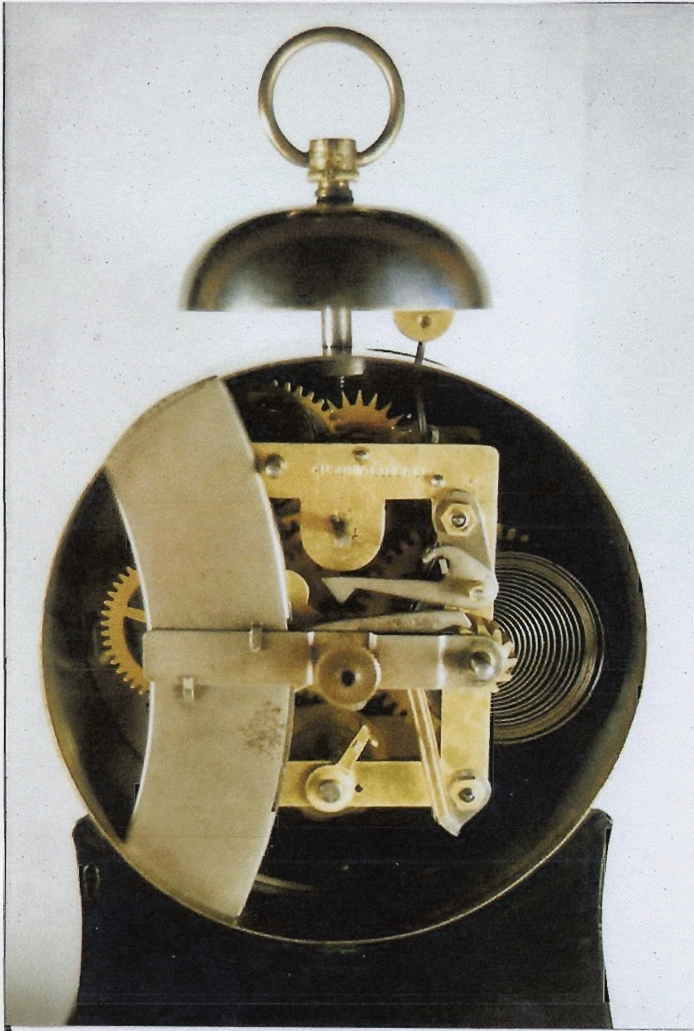
When you drop a penny in the slot, it releases a lever so you can wind the clock. The movement is a standard lever action 24 to 30 hour movement. There is a lever on the hour hand shaft that resets the locking mechanism.

To wind the clock again you have to drop another penny in the slot for another 24 hour period. The alarm can set at anytime.

HAS ANYONE EVER SEE ANOTHER OF THESE PIECES ? If so please send the editor an e-mail at rlink3@juno.com.



Front View (note the door with a Combination lock)



Note the chute that carries the penny into the bottom

Rear View



The original legs were left on the clock even though they are not needed

THE SELDOM SEEN 'LITTLE BEN'

Sometime ago I read about the Western Clock Mfg. Co. producing a precursor to the famous Baby Ben model alarm clock. After many years of searching marts for an example of the supposed alarm clock called alternately "baby Ben" or "Little Ben" my friend Vince Angell presented me with one he believed to be one of these pieces. There is no name on the dial or case and not even a company name but the patent dates make it positive that this item was made by the Western Clock Mfg. Co.

A search of the W&C Bulletin archives reveals two mentions of the Western Clock Company's 'Little Ben' alarm clock. One is an article that appears in the August 1983 Bulletin written by Richard Tjarks and William Stoddard. This just mentions that trademarks were issued to the Western Clock Mfg. Co. for the names "Little Ben and "baby Ben" sometime after the introduction of the Big Ben alarm clock in 1908. The other reference is to a 'Timely Voice' piece that appeared in the June 1996 Bulletin. In this short article Robert Schug describes what would appear to be one of the "Little Ben" clocks mentioned earlier.

The piece I acquired did not run but that did not matter to me as I was interested in looking at the movement and trying to determine if possible why the company only produced this model for so short a time (apparently from 1910 to 1912). As any collector and repairers of Westclox movements can tell you the company always stamped a manufacture date somewhere on the movement, mine is dated 7 28 10 (see Figure 3). There is also a number 7 and 15 stamped on the back plate to the right of the date. See figure 4 to view these stampings. I have no idea what the 7 and 15 indicate unless this was the 15 unit in the 7th assembly sequence. Maybe someone else can shed some light on this!

When I removed the movement from the case it was apparent why it would not run and the hands could not be set. A look at Figure 5 and 6 will show that someone had taken a soldering iron to the arbor assembly which contained the clutch mechanism that allowed the hand to be set and also contained the great wheel. As stated in the articles I found the movement was the Westclox 2" movement that the company had been using in novelty clocks for sometime. An alarm mechanism had been piggy backed on this movement to create a smaller version of the successful Big Ben. Why no identification was placed on this piece is a mystery that may never be solved, perhaps this is a prototype clock.

I removed parts from a 2" movement I had in my collection to replace the damaged assemblies and the Little Ben is now working. I hope someday to find parts to again get the sacrificial clock into running order again.

This is a description of the clock:

They have a typical Westclox early legged alarm case with nickel case and the three screws on the outer edge of the front face. The measurements are: 2 ¾ inches in diameter, 1 ¾ deep, stands 3 7/8 to the top of the ring, and has a 2" chapter ring. The case looks a lot like the early Baby Legged Alarms except they are 3/16 deeper. Also look for the alarm set to be at the 6:00 o'clock position. On the back the Time set knob will be offset from the center and at the 12:00 o'clock position. A unique feature of the Little Ben movement that I have never seen before is that the Alarm time is set by moving the hand in the clockwise direction not the counter clockwise as is normal. Have any of you observed this feature on any other clock?

I haven't been able to find any information as to why these pieces were only made for about 2 years but suspect that they were too difficult to assemble or they proved unreliable, this even though the company had been manufacturing the 2" movement for use in novelty clocks for many years before and after discontinuing this model. It is obvious that management decided to design and manufacture a clock from scratch. This of course resulted in the very successful Baby Ben which was produced by the company from 1913 till they closed shop in the late 1990's. You can still buy Baby Bens as well as Big Bens but all are now manufactured in China and have nothing but plastic parts.

I would appreciate more information that anyone has on these pieces. Please contact me at rlink3@juno.com.

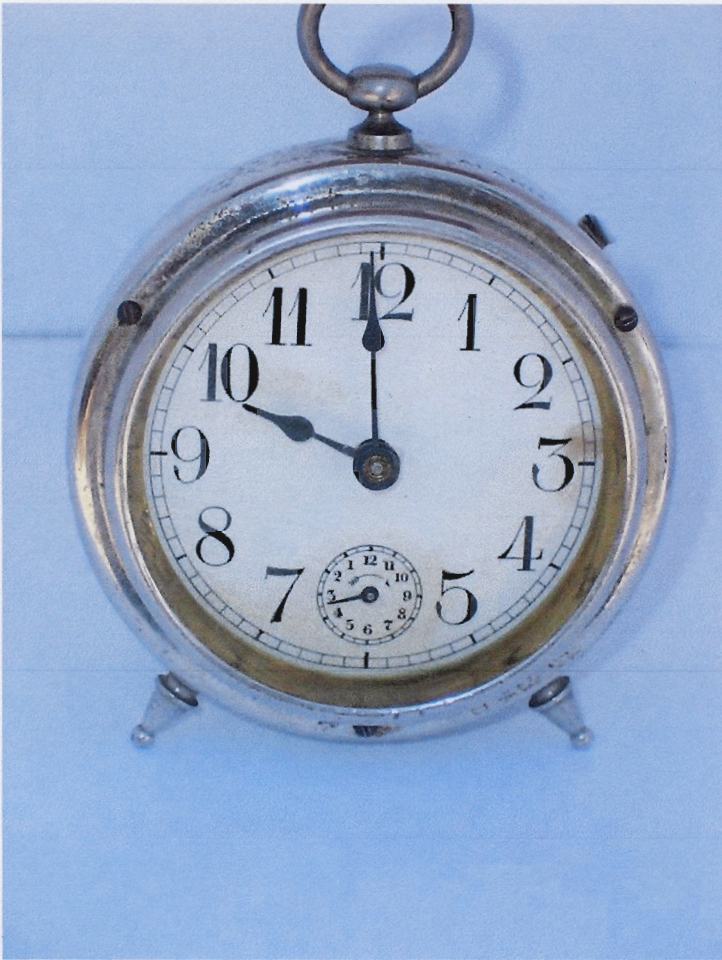


Figure 1 front view Note the Alarm set Arrow is pointing clockwise



Figure 2 Rear view note the position of the hand set knob

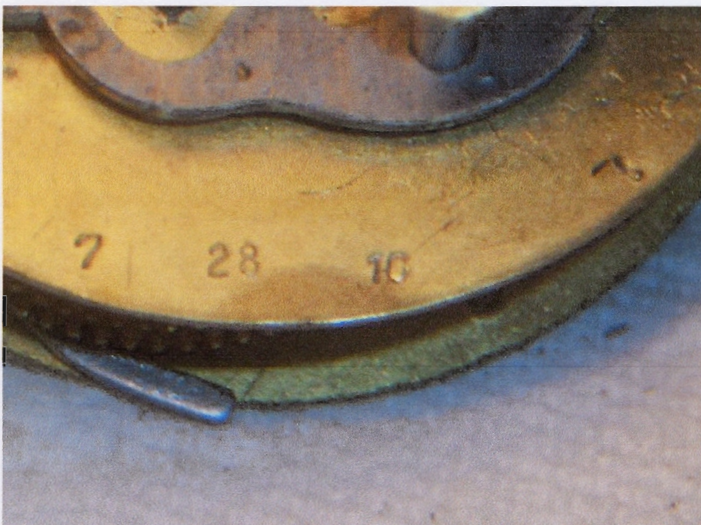


Figure 3 showing date of manufacture

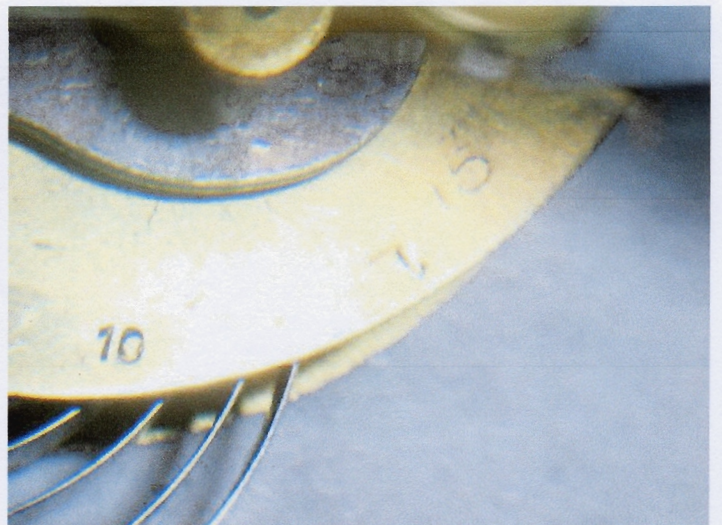


Figure 4 Note the faint 7 and 15



Figure 5 View of the great wheel with solder damage The pinion should be on a clutch so the hands may be set

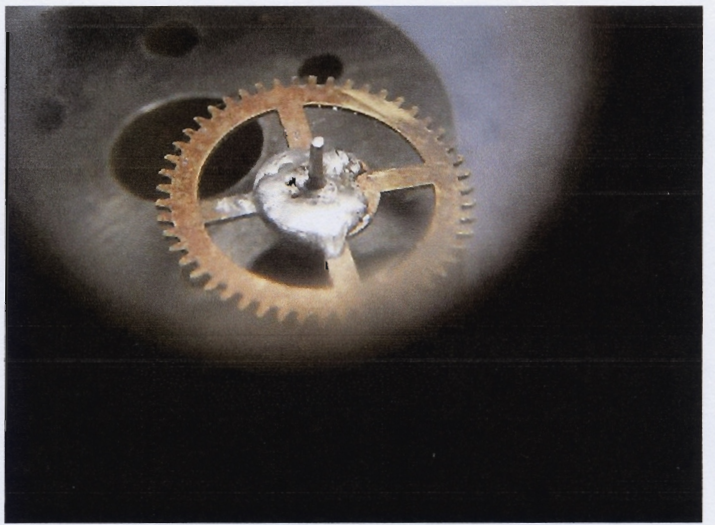


Figure 6 Front view of the great wheel



Figure 7 Front view of the movement, The minute shaft does not go through the plate but instead is a hollow tube mounted on a shaft that is riveted to the plate. The hands are set by the small pinion at the 5:30 position and messed with the intermittent wheel.

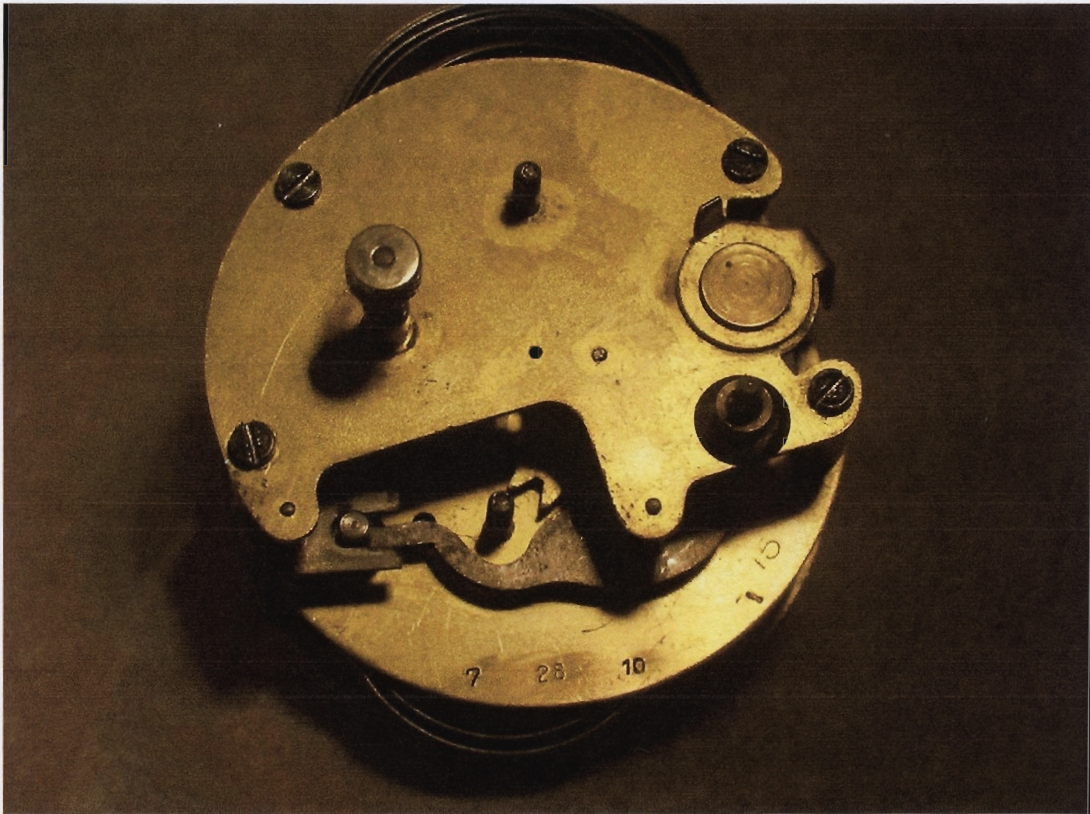


Figure 8 Back view of movement. The knob at the 9:30 position is for setting the hands

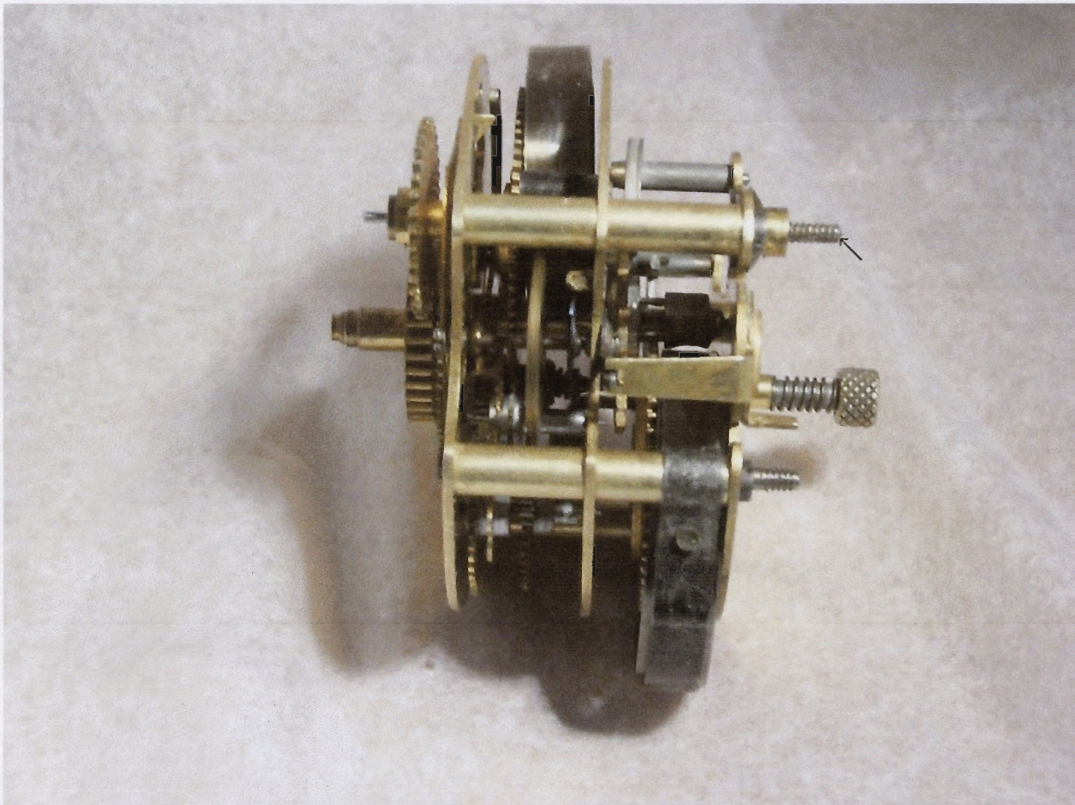


Figure 9 Note the small arrow pointing to the Alarm set knob which is threaded left hand causing the hand to be set in a clockwise direction.