

# The Pendulum

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF WILLARD HOUSE & CLOCK MUSEUM



- LATE SUMMER 2021 -

## Message from the Director



I am delighted to re-introduce The Pendulum after a long absence. Our goal is to produce this as an online publication to save printing and mailing costs while improving our ability to share more of our collection, programs, online and on-site events, new website content, and historical tidbits too. Please know that we will on occasion, still send out conventional correspondence to you.

If you don't receive our mailed correspondence, please provide your street address here. We won't abuse it! I promise.

COVID-19 has adversely affected museums worldwide and Willard has experienced its own losses with unexpected opportunities as well. We are enhancing our approach to the community, finding ways for horology to be more relevant to young students of science, and making plans for reinvestment in this historically significant place.

Sadly, Willard lost two very important friends over the last 2- 1/2 years. The first, Willard Trustee, David G. Newsom, died on February 29, 2020, as a probable early victim of the virus. A long-time trustee, I can just hear David chuckling over the irony of dying on February 29th, so one only a need to mourn his passing every four years! David thought of the museum before he died and donated his astronomical floor-standing shop regulator made by Simon Willard Jr. (1795-1874) and used by him by 1830 in his newly established Boston shop at 9 Congress



Street. This rare precision regulator descended in the family of Simon Willard Jr. until acquired by Mr. Newsom over twenty years ago. This important clock is now part of the permanent collection here and is reunited with Simon Jr's gold watch, his miniature portrait on ivory, and other family treasures previously acquired by the museum.



July 3rd, we awakened to hear of the passing of David Gow, Willard's long-time conservator of the magnificent collection of clocks here at Willard. David was widely respected for his skills as a clockmaker and cabinetmaker but few realized his other skills as a vintage Mercedes mechanic, a lover of sacred music, a budding pianist, and a daring sailor having made several "Bermuda Crossings" with his wife Barbara in their 37 ft. Pacific Sea Craft blue water yacht!

David and Barbara are loved by their Willard family and we offer our deepest condolences to their two sons and respective family members.

In accordance with David's wishes we have set up the **David G. Gow Memorial Fund for Horological Education** with a very generous donation from his family. Future donations to the fund are always welcome at: [www.willardhouse.org](http://www.willardhouse.org).



**DIETRICH  
AMERICAN  
FOUNDATION**

I am pleased to announce the collaboration between Willard and the prestigious **Dietrich American Foundation** with a long-term loan from the foundation of an important Benjamin Willard (1743-1803) Grafton

eight-day clock. Undergoing minor conservation and professional photography first, this clock was made in our Grafton workshop about 250 years ago! It will be showcased in our gallery within the next several months.

**Click on the Dietrich American Foundation logo and visit their website.**



Willard has also established a partnership with the oldest watchmakers guild in America, the Horological Society of New York, founded in 1866. **Check out their website** for a look at the important work underway by the organization including a wonderful archive of lectures viewable anytime.

**Click on the Horological Society of NY logo and visit their website.**

As 2021 moves along, we will be announcing new programs and planning for our 50th Anniversary. Your support, in any way from comments to donations, is readily and warmly accepted.

We look forward to a period of change, good health, a face-to-face, and a hug or two.



P.S.

I would be remiss if I failed to thank the driving force behind The Pendulum since its inception, Trustee Emeritus, Clock Maker, and New England horological treasure, John Losch. John had been a Trustee for 20 years and his guidance has been invaluable here at Willard and for our members. Thank you, John!



Photo courtesy of Rich McKoul

## Collection Update

A Gift From David G. Newsom

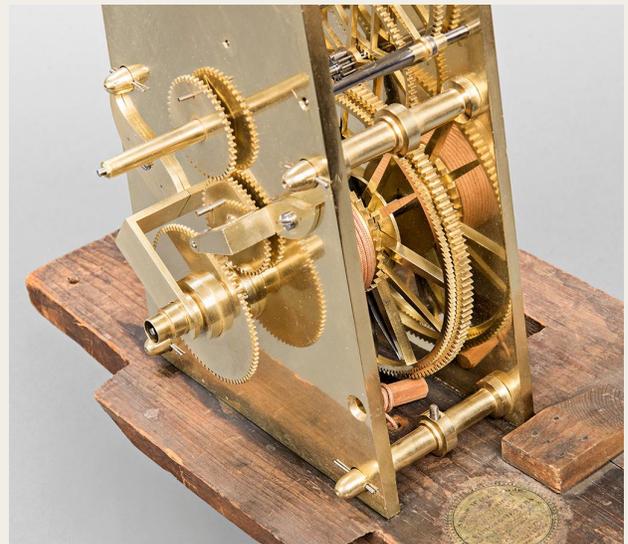
In the fall of 2019, David Newsom gifted this Simon Willard, Jr./Boston, c 1830 astronomical regulator to Willard House and Clock Museum. This wonderful clock is only one of three known by this maker (Willard has two now in house) and descended in the Simon Willard Jr's family until acquired by Mr. Newsom back about 2005.

The mahogany veneered case in the Gothic taste is often seen with New York city names on the dial, and considered a "NY case". Simon Jr. worked in New York from 1826 to 1828 so it is likely he was very familiar with the cabinetmakers making this form.

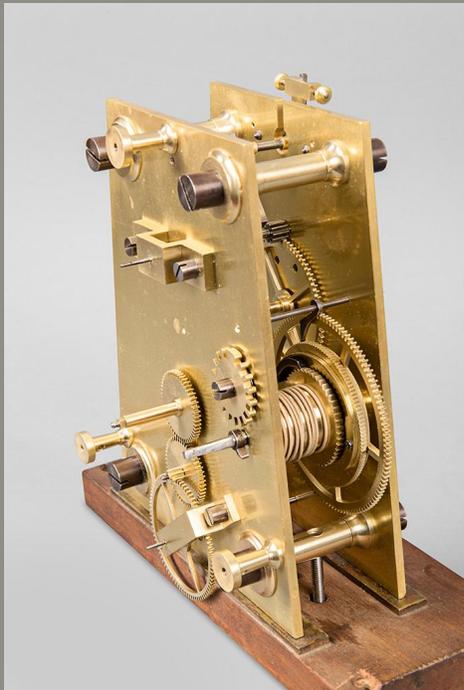
The massive eight-day movement

features jeweled pallets, a Geneva stop and maintaining power, all powered by a brass cased weight and regulated by a temperature compensating glass vial mercury pendulum.

A detail of the lower left corner of the movement shows the quality and scale of the plates and wheel work. For the horologists, note the maintaining power on the great wheel and two of the six pillars separating the plates. Note also, the Simon Willard Jr. watch label on the seating board.



The Museum has been very fortunate in acquiring other objects from Simon Willard Jr. descendants, like this miniature portrait on ivory of the clockmaker as a young man, which also contains a lock of his hair inside the locket.



## A Promised Gift From Charles N. Grichar

To add another miracle of rarity: Trustee Charles N. Grichar has loaned his recently purchased Simon Willard Jr. astronomical regulator for a three-year period. The mahogany case in the form of a Greek column is unique in American circles for regulators of this type. The Museum now has in-house, two of the three known regulators by this maker! The third is at the Historical and Scientific Instruments Department at Harvard University.

The brass movement is a study workhorse with Geneva Stop, maintaining power and jeweled dead-beat pallets all powered by a brass-cased weight.

Access to the pendulum and weight is gained by unlocking

then removing a side panel of the mahogany case.



The eight-sided base features recessed panels of highly figured veneer set in molded frames. The central panel carries a cast brass gilded depiction of "sibyl" in a similar fashion to the Patent Alarm Timepiece (lighthouse clock) design.

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Watch The New Video Featured  
On WHCM YouTube Channel



## Research Corner

Paul J. Foley

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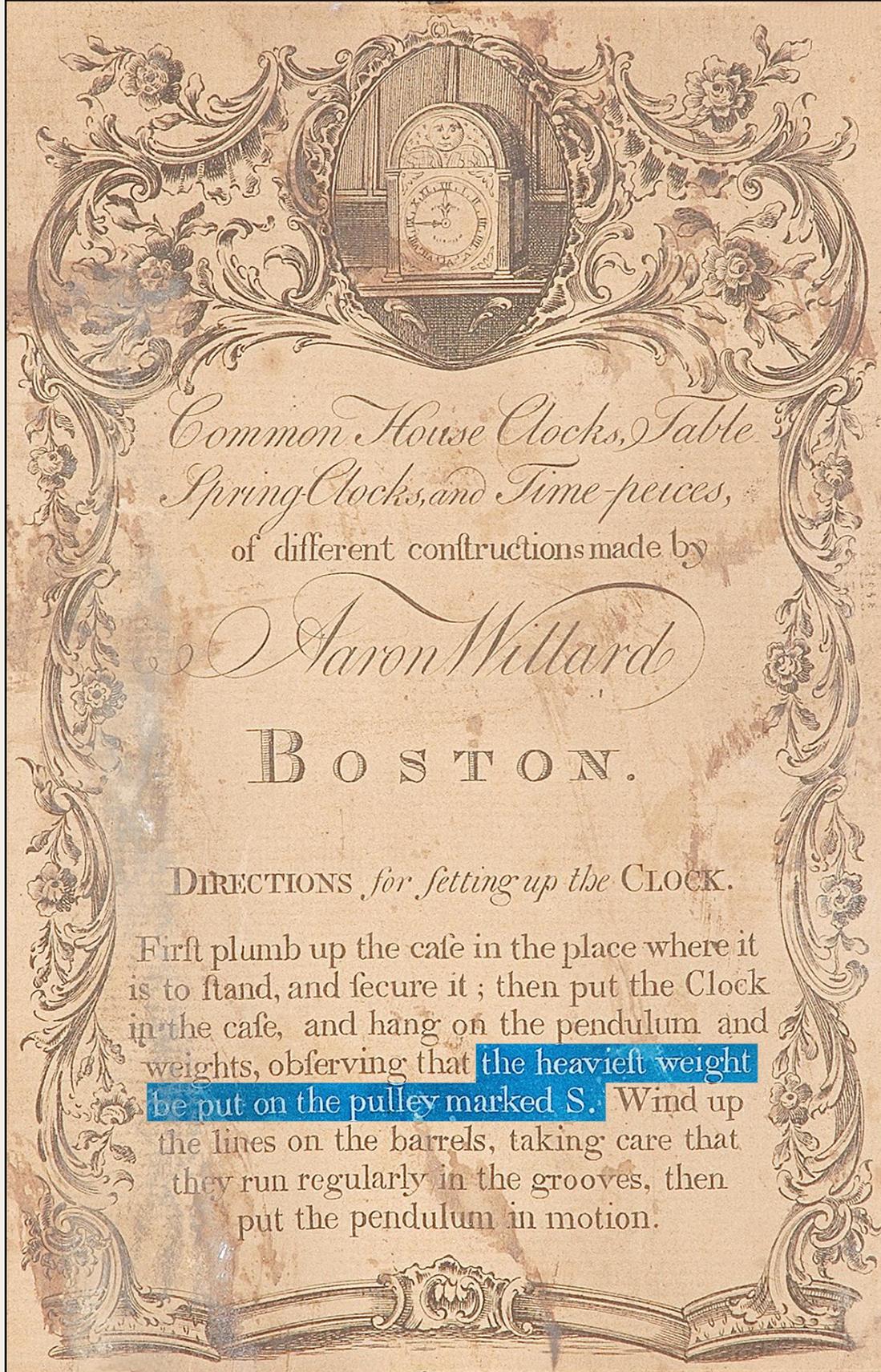
### *"S" is for STRIKE*

Nineteenth-century Connecticut clockmakers often pasted detailed printed advertising labels inside their clocks. Rarely did eighteenth-century clockmakers put labels in their tall clocks, but Roxbury / Boston clockmakers Simon and Aaron Willard were an exception. They did put printed labels in some of their tall clocks. These were usually pasted or nailed to the back of the pendulum door. These labels often contained advertising, warranty, and directions information.

Aaron Willard put a detailed printed "Directions label" inside many of his tall clocks. Several variations of this Aaron label are known but they all included his "DIRECTIONS, *for setting up the CLOCK*".

Most clocks with different size weights required the heaviest go on the strike side, but the average customer might not know which was the strike side so Aaron instructed them; "...*the heaviest weight be put on the pulley marked S.*" Not many collectors or repairers have paid attention to this little detail in his label instructions, but if you look closely at some Aaron Willard weight pulleys you might find one with his "S" stamp.

**Illustrated below are a few stamped examples  
from signed Aaron Willard tall clocks.**



**Directions Label**  
Photo courtesy of Paul J. Foley



**Aaron Willard Pulleys**  
Photo courtesy of Paul J. Foley

## Events

Even though COVID closed the museum for nearly 15 months, we introduced two new programs:

### WHCM Concert Series



Grain Thief, Americana Acoustic Quintet

April 11

*Grain Thief*

Free Live-Streaming Broadcast

June 26

*Empty Bottle Ramblers*

Free Live-Streaming Broadcast

### WHCM Plein Air Series



Plein Air painting by Margo Cascella

September 25

October 23

November 11

**REGISTER**

**WATCH RECORDINGS**



## Plan Your Visit

### Museum Hours:

Open Tuesday- Saturday

Tours: 10:30am and 2:00pm

Sunday, Monday and  
all national holidays: Closed

### Museum Fees:

Members FREE

Adults \$10

Seniors 60+ \$9

Kids 13 plus: \$6

Kids 12 and under: FREE

Veterans and First Responders: FREE

[Sign Up For A Tour](#)

## Thank You Sponsors and Donors

The Willard House and Clock Museum is very grateful for the generous support of the following corporate and personal donors. At Willard, we try very hard to maintain a high level of programming throughout the year and without outside support, this would not be possible.

If you or your business wishes to support the programs, donations of any size are welcomed and go to continued and new here at Willard.

[Please Donate](#)

If you would like to learn more about special events or customized corporate or foundation programming, please contact: [Robert@willardhouse.org](mailto:Robert@willardhouse.org) Thank you.

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\*\*Deceased

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Willard House & Clock Museum

-The Center of Early American Clockmaking-

WHCM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit museum

