



# The First One...

Where were you when you saw the clock or watch that became the first piece in your collection? Tell us what it was, send in a photo, and share some of the memories that go with it: NAWCC Publications Department, 514 Poplar St., Columbia, PA 17512, or e-mail to Editor Diana DeLuca at [ddeluca@nawcc.org](mailto:ddeluca@nawcc.org).

## *Cyrus Wind Dancer (CA)*

**P**rominence is the word that comes to my mind as I look back at the start of my career. It was 1920, and I was with a family of seven children in Cleveland, OH. My tubular chimes, either Westminster or Winchester echoed throughout the mansion on the quarter hour, half hour, three-quarter hour, and hour. Mantel clocks and pocket watches were readjusted by my reliable strike. The family and its timepieces relied on me.

Then came the move out to the old farmhouse in the country. The Depression followed, and in 1937 I came to a halt; I could no longer swing my pendulum equally from side to side. No one was summoned to correct what ailed me. Debt and World War II had shifted priorities. Interest in me evaporated. I was no longer the source of time, but I had plenty of time on my hands to observe all the comings and goings. The house became quieter as the children departed. I faded into a background of silence for the next two decades. Wristwatches and radios were the fads.

I am sure you are wondering about me. I am a tall clock whose works were made in the Winterhalder and Hoffmeyer factory in Neustadt, Germany. My movement was stamped "88." My names were spelled in various ways over time. Depending on what sources you explore, Johannes Hofmeier and Mattha Winterhalder had a business relationship that developed around 1840. The clock factory was founded around 1864-1869 by the four sons of Matthaus, Anton, Karl, Thomas, and Johannes. In 1890 Anton Winterhalder married the



Cyrus and clock about 25 years ago.

daughter of John Hoffmeier. So you can see everyone was more or less related to everyone else. The main market for their products was outside of Germany. The doors of the clock division closed in 1933. These were hard times and many clock companies met the same fate.

With the next generation, the farmhouse came alive on Sundays when the expanded family gathered for a sit down formal lunch. In 1957 an 11-year-old grandson took an interest in me. Young Cyrus would come every Thursday evening to eat dinner with his grandfather. I will never forget one night. It was the day Russia had sent Sputnik into space. I remember hearing the grandfather tell his grandson that this event would change the twentieth century.

I also experienced a profound event. With spare time before dinner, the grandson turned the key and opened my door to the front of my case. It had been years since I had experienced fresh air in my innards. He stood on a stool and opened my side panels, exposing my movement. He examined me from head to foot. I was probed here and there. I could tell the boy had the right stuff to become a clock smith someday. He lifted each hammer and watched it drop. Finally he located the wind-up key that had not been touched for years. The grandson rethreaded each one of the cables properly around my drums. He repositioned my pulleys, and the heavy weights began their journey up as this boy started the winding process. Power was restored to all three of my trains. With a slight push, my pendulum began swinging from side to side. I was stiff. Oil in my pivots had hardened. I stopped quickly, but that didn't deter the young boy. He kept giving me gentle pushes. Each time, as I loosened up, I would run a bit longer. Another push and all three of my trains went into action. The whirling progressed as I went from warning to chimes and finally striking. The grandfather came running over with astonishment because he had not heard the chimes for 20 years. Cyrus never forgot the excitement on his grandfather's face, I only ran a short time that evening, but now there was renewed interest in me. It was discovered that the floor had sagged and the only thing wrong was that I had been leaning to my side. Little did I know then that I would be Cyrus's first clock, and I would travel to join him 40 years later.



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My wheel on the moon dial had a dreadnought battleship painted on it. Dreadnoughts renewed the naval arms race, principally between England and Germany, in the first decade of the 1900s. While dreadnought-building consumed vast resources in the early twentieth century, there was only one battle between the large dreadnought fleets. At the Battle of Jutland, the British and German navies clashed with no decisive result. Most of the dreadnoughts were scrapped after the end of World War I under the terms of the Washington Naval Treaty. So part of me was already outdated when I left Winterhalder and Hoffmeyer.

My first journey was by boat across the ocean and finally to Zeeland, MI, to be put into a case and given the number 1393 by Colonial Clock Company. Colonial crafted cases and used a variety of moments. The company ceased operation in 1987.

You can find my picture in *Longcase Clocks and Standing Regulators* by Tran Duy Ly, page 109. My movement also can be seen on page 71.

me up. I continued my stay in Ohio with the second generation until it was time for the father to downsize and move in to a retirement home. I didn't make the cut. The family urged Cyrus to sell me but the answer was a big no. Again, it was about priorities. A cousin stepped in and urged the family to pay to have the clock shipped to the West Coast. I made the journey to Bainbridge Island near Seattle by truck. I arrived in disrepair. Many had worked on me over the years and much of it was shoddy workmanship. Once again Cyrus borrowed money and sent me to the finest clocksmith in the Seattle area: The Broadway Clock Shop run by Roger Hewat. I spent two years at the clock shop waiting for my turn to be restored. The clocksmith encouraged Cyrus to take steps to learn the art of repairing clocks. Before I was finished, Cyrus had moved back to California and he made a special trip to pick me up and take me there.

I once again was reconnected with Cyrus's father at his home after he moved to California to finish out

In 1979 the grandfather passed away. My future was uncertain. Then the grandson came back into my life. Cyrus was then 33 years old, and he had never forgotten me. He took out a loan, bought me from the estate, and flew from California to claim me. He carefully wrapped me up and hauled me to an uncle's barn an hour away, where I was stored in a loft. Cyrus had no means to take me with him. I spent a few cold winters in the loft. One day Cyrus's father retrieved me. I was brought back to life and installed in his house. Every Sunday the father would wind

his life. I have known Cyrus for 54 years and have been with the family for 91 years. The fifth generation is starting to hang out with me now. The ritual of winding me had been handed down. At the moment I am in storage, wanting for Cyrus to come back and get me. I was the inspiration for him to head off to the NAWCC School of Horology in Columbia, PA. He tells me that his dream is to open his own clock shop. He will rely on me to greet the customers as they come in. So much has shifted in the world. Although cell phones are now the rage for telling time, I will once again be in a position of prominence.

*The opening of Cyrus's shop is planned for June 2012 in Santa Rosa, CA. See [www.clocksmithycyrus.com](http://www.clocksmithycyrus.com).*

*Chris Beattie (NY)*

I grew up in a very large family and the center of the family revolved around my grandparents. I have nine aunts and uncles and over 50 first cousins. When I was a child there was routinely between 10 and 15 grandkids at Grandpa's house on a Sunday afternoon for dinner. The three things that remind me the most of Grandpa (outside of his family of course!) were the New York Yankees, Notre Dame Football, and his Brewster & Ingrahams steeple clock with a frosted lower tablet of a hot air balloon. When it was time to wind the clock, Grandpa would make a big deal out of it and all us grandkids would sit while he chose one grandchild that he thought was behaving the best that day. It was the best behaved youngster in Grandpa's eyes that got to wind the clock that Sunday, while everyone else watched and wished that it was he or she that had been chosen. This family-centered clock ritual is one that I will remember forever. I have to admit that I did not get to wind the clock too often, but when I did it was fantastic!

Several years later when I was an adult in my mid-twenties I saw a clock



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at a garage sale and inquired about it. It was a Waterbury, enameled wood, black mantel clock, with a partial label on the back that read "PARLOR SPECIAL." I asked the gentleman if the clock worked and he said that he thought it did but he had not wound it in some time. I opened the back and pretended to know what I was looking for and everything looked normal to the untrained eye. I flicked the strike hammer up and listened to how it gonged. It immediately reminded me of my then-deceased grandfather and the ritual of who got to wind it while Grandpa approvingly watched over your shoulder as the key turned; click, click, click... I asked the gentleman how much he wanted for the old clock and he said \$25. SOLD!

When I returned home with my new treasure and all my thoughts running through my head, I placed the pendulum bob on the hook, wound it, and tried to start the clock. It ran for only a few seconds and stopped. I tried several times to get it run-

ning but to no avail. I looked in the phonebook for a clock repair person, and because we lived in a small town, there was only one listed. I called the business and spoke to an elderly man who seemed upset that I would even bother him with such a trivial question about my non-running clock. I asked him if I dropped the clock off if he could take a look at it and tell me how much it might cost to get it running again. The old curmudgeon told me that he was way too busy to help me and that I should call back in six months when it was more convenient for him and he would THEN put me on a waiting list. I was more than a little upset but politely said "ok, I will call back in six months." By the time I hung up the phone, I was steaming mad because of his attitude toward a potential customer. Over the next few days I searched the Internet to see if I could find a potential remedy for my non-running clock, and I was still just as mad. What I did find were many repair books and DVD programs, which I slowly ordered

and used to teach myself the trade of clock repair. Then I began to order some tools that I would need to fix this clock myself. I thought to myself "I'll show you about being rude to a potential paying customer!" I bought a downtrodden, 30-hour, shelf clock to "tear apart," and I set out to teach myself about repairing an antique clock. Needless to say that I did fix it as well as my Waterbury "PARLOR SPECIAL." Several years after that, I was also "allowed" to fix Grandpa's Brewster & Ingrahams steeple clock by my grandmother, who is today in her late 80s. That was nearly 15 years ago and since then I have started my own part-time antique clock repair business. As for the old curmudgeon, I never called him back after six months, but I met him at an auction a few years ago when we were both bidding on the same clocks. He approached me and said "Hi, my name is so and so and I was just wondering what you are going to do with all those broken clocks?" I explained to the old curmudgeon that I was buying the clocks to repair and sell. He asked me where I was from and I told him that I was from the same town as he and I began to repair clocks several years ago when I called him for help and he was rude to me and told me to call back in six months to be put on his waiting list. That ended that conversation.

My Waterbury "Parlor Special" is still part of my collection. Every now and then when I face a challenging repair, I will look at my first clock, remember everything it has meant to me, and get the confidence to forge ahead. From the fond family memories; to the curmudgeon who sparked my desire to repair clocks; to my passion for antique clocks; that Waterbury "PARLOR SPECIAL" is a special part of my life that I am grateful for. Although my first clock is not one of the most valuable clocks in my collection, it has a special place in my life and a great story to go with it!