

Ben E. Fulbright, FNAWCC  
From: ben\_fulbright@juno.com (Fulbright, Ben E.)

Below is a self explanatory copy of a newspaper article. As I have indicated before, I am thinking of a publication at some time in the future. This is from same, strictly for sharing.

QUOTE BEGINS NOW:

SIMON WILLARD NEVER

Reprinted from The New York Sun, April 1, 1949.  
Phillipse E. Greene Copyright 1949.

This article is compiled from the basis of forty years of collecting, research, and personal observation, also from overhauling Simon Willard clocks.

It is written to protect the public from purchasing banjo clocks represented as having been made by Simon Willard of Grafton or Roxbury, Mass, (born 1753--died 1848). I personally knew of at least thirty-eight instances where this has happened. I have seen only six of the originals, of which I own two.

Many customers brought in so-called original Simon Willard clocks that they had paid \$1200 to \$3200 for, found they turned out to be worth \$75 to \$150.

I have seen the clocks with painted door glasses depicting battle scenes, rural scenes, Washington's tomb, even Dewey's Victory in Manila Bay, which did not take place until fifty-nine years after Willard died.

Listed below are thirty-one ways in which an imitation or reproduction can be detected. I knew of one customer whose husband paid \$16,000 for fourteen Simon Willard clocks, banjos, shelf, wall, and tall clocks, every one a rank fake. They were sent to an auction gallery, the names removed, and were sold for \$1275, as is.

Following are the points to be kept in mind:

Simon Willard never--

1. Used a flag or eagle or landscape or battle scene on the glasses in his banjo clocks except in "Presentation Clocks."
2. Used anything for a finial except a gilded wood or brass acorn; brass gilded ball with acorn leaves, except on his "Presentation Clocks," which were custom made. On these he used a gilded wooden eagle or anything his customer demanded.
3. Used gilding on his banjo clocks.
4. Used any hands except the barbed spear type, which were very thin and delicately filed out.
5. Used hooks or buttons to keep the brass bezel glass frame over the dial closed. He used a catch created by himself which had a screw going through the brass bezel with a notch filed near the inside end which engaged with a spring steel ribbon let into the side of the round wooden clock case.
6. Used a hook or button to hold the lower door over the pendulum bob closed. Instead a machine screw about 3/16 of an inch had the inside edge bent at a right angle, the other end squared to take the key which wound the clock, then this screw was screwed through a tight fitting hole in the door frame. This door could be locked so that nobody could change the regulation of the clock and the key was either carried on the person or hidden.
7. Used baked enamel or thin metal dials; they were made of heavy

- iron with seven or eight coats of ivory enamel, then Roman numerals painted on in black.
8. Used Arabic numbers on his dials.
  9. Used faces on his banjo clocks. Faces are square or square with a lunette at the top, but dials are round.
  10. Used the name "banjo" for his clocks. They were his "Improved Timepieces." The word banjo has been coined by dealers, repairmen, and cabinetmakers.
  11. Used any other method for securing the dial to the case except screws with a slotted right angle head.
  12. Used screws in the back plate of the movement to hold in the case, or bolts and nuts or L-head nails driven into the back board and then turned over the rear plate of the movement. The movement was always held to the back board by two long screws which passed through the front and back plate of the movement and into the back board of the clock case. These screws had a coarse machine thread on one end and the same end was 1/16 of an inch smaller in diameter than the other end, which was slotted. Also the holes in the back plate were 1/16 of an inch smaller than the front plate so the rear shoulder drew the back plate firmly to the back board. These screws were always finely blued.
  13. Made wooden clocks nor did any of his brothers. The Willards of Ashby, Mass., made wooden clocks. They were distant relatives.
  14. Put his name on his banjo clocks except "Presentation Clocks."
  15. Used Boston as a place of manufacture. This scene on dials is a crude restoration to enhance the value of a clock since most people associate Willard with Boston. He never worked there. His shops were in Grafton and Roxbury. After he retired, he lived in Boston. His son, Simon Jr., lived and worked in Boston.
  16. Used anything but a double bridge to hang the pendulum from.
  17. Used anything but hand drawn or hammered plates for the movement, which made them harder.
  18. Put his name on the waist glass. This was done by his brother, Aaron.
  19. Used curved iron for his dials. They were always flat.
  20. Used or made a striking banjo. His brother Aaron made them to strike on a bell above the case, also to strike on the case itself.
  21. Used thick back boards. They were always 1/4 of an inch thick and of pine.
  22. Puttied the glasses into the frames. They were held by triangular strips of soft wood about 2 inches long held by a little glue and one brad.
  23. Put the winding hole in the dial any other place except opposite II o'clock.
  24. Used a base piece except on "Presentation Clocks."
  25. Used short, stubby teeth on his wheels and pinions. They were always long and slightly convex teeth.
  26. Put his labels and operating directions inside his banjo clocks.
  27. Used anything but four screws to hold the waist glass frame to the case. Simon Jr. used wood tongues at the top and bottom of the frame, which slid under the dial at the top and was held by two screws going through the tongue at the bottom and going into the case back of the door.
  28. Engraved or stamped his name on any part of the movement.
  29. Used anything but an iron rod for the pendulum rod and a brass

covered lead pendulum bob.

30. Used anything to lock the bottom of the pendulum for traveling except a square piece of slotted brass drawn against the bottom of the pendulum rod by an iron screw.
31. Used anything but a flat glass in the bezel covering the dial since curved glasses were not imported to this country from France until 1836, after he had retired.

:END OF QUOTE

I want to thank Ben Fulbright for taking the time and energy required to assemble the above information and share it with the E-mailing called Clockers.

To personally thank him or to sent comments his E-mail address is: ben\_fulbright@juno.com

A service from, E-mail address: Mike@atmos-man.com  
Mike Murray Founder of Clocksmiths

A specialist in Atmos and 400-day clock repair.  
Also, I overhaul most plug in electric clocks.  
In continuous horological service since 04/01/1982.

Mike's Clock Clinic Membership: NAWCC  
1600 Maryland Avenue  
Myrtle Point, OR 97458-1508

Phone: 541-559-1090 or 877-286-6762

My main Web site is located at "<http://www.atmosman.com/>"

Main FTP site is located at:  
"http://home.earthlink.net/~atmosman/earthftp.html"

Copyright 1996-2013 by Ben E. Fulbright & Michael P. Murray