

Observatory time

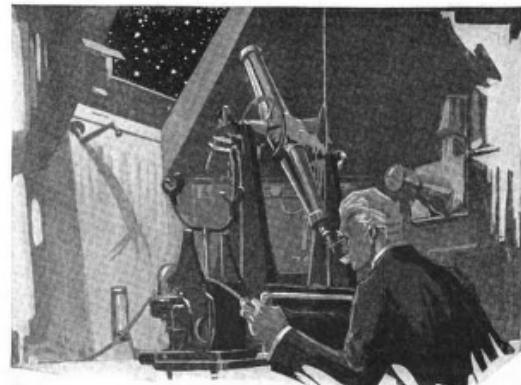
As American watchmaking matured and competition increased, the manufacturers sought ways to increase the accuracy of their products. Methods of providing accurate timepieces for maritime navigation, including observatories and chronometers, had been used for many years. In 1829, time-balls were first used in England, and in 1845 the first time-ball was constructed in the United States. In the early 1850s observatories in London (Kew), Neuchatel, Geneva, and Besancon were testing timepiece movements for accuracy. The testing process lasted about 45 days, with each movement tested in 5 positions and 2 temperatures, in 10 series of 4-5 days each. Upon passing this rigorous testing, the movements were issued a certification from the observatory. Opened in 1844, the United States Naval Observatory in Foggy Bottom (Washington DC), was responsible for caring for the US Navy's marine chronometers, charts, and other navigational equipment.

With increasing railroad transportation and more awareness of timetables, there was an even greater need for accurate timepieces. Although numerous references state that Elgin was the first to have their own observatory (put into service in February of 1910), that wasn't the case. The January 11, 1907 ad pictured to the right states that "...For thirty years Waltham has been the only watch-factory in the world equipped with its own Observatory, Transit Instrument, Chronograph and Standard Clocks."

Even before this ad was published, the April 15, 1905 issue of *Scientific American* described the various components of the Waltham observatory, and Henry G. Abbott included the *Scientific American* article in his 1905 book, *History of the American Waltham Watch Company of Waltham, Mass.*

THE LITERARY DIGEST

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Waltham Watches Take Their Time
from the Stars

For thirty years Waltham has been the only watch-factory in the world equipped with its own Observatory, Transit Instrument, Chronograph and Standard Clocks. Standard time, as every one knows, is determined by the transit of fixed stars across the meridian.

WALTHAM

makes its own time reckonings, and sidereal and mean-time clocks compared to decimals of a second, electrically transmit time throughout their factory.

There is no guess work about Waltham. Scientific accuracy is its guiding principle and explains the reputation for reliability of Waltham watches throughout the world.

"It's Time You Owned a Waltham."

Write for handsome booklet describing the various Waltham movements. Your jeweler will assist you in the selection of the one best suited to your needs.

WALTHAM WATCH COMPANY,

WALTHAM, MASS.

The
January 11,
1907 issue of
*The American
Monthly
Review of
Reviews and*

World's Work included an article called "The Machines That Never Stop" by J. Hopkins. This article detailed the story of Aaron Dennison and Waltham watches, and states that the reason more railroad men carry Walthams is that they contain *better values* than any other. The 5th value was that "The Waltham is better regulated." "The first thing in watch regulation is to know the right time. To get this knowledge a fortune has been spent at Waltham." The referenced expenditure was construction of and updates to the observatory at the Waltham facility.

Although the Waltham observatory allowed accurate setting and testing to be done onsite, some watches were still sent to the Kew Observatory in England. The Kew certifications were often used in advertising related to various awards at Expositions and Exhibitions, including this 1915 ad (left) that announces the award at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco.

Next month, we'll look at other watch companies that had their own observatories.

That
Waltham
Watches

surpass all others is definitely established by the following tests:

At the World Expositions, wherever exhibited, Waltham Watches have received highest awards. At the Panama-Pacific Exposition, Waltham took the Grand Prize over all competitors.

At the great Kew Observatory more Waltham Watches receive the "A" rating than any other make. Only one other American manufacturer has ever received the "A" rating and then only on a single watch.

There are more Waltham Railroad Watches in use the world over than any other make.

Scientists recognize the superiority of Waltham Watches. All the American polar expeditions (where accuracy is essential) have taken Waltham time-pieces.

These facts are more eloquent than any mere words.

Of all watches the Waltham Riverside Series

are the most famous. There are various sizes and styles of Riverside Watches but they all have the Riverside character of fine accuracy, surplus strength and long life. Most of the improvements in watch making for a generation have first been incorporated in Riverside Watches.

The man who has one of these Riversides in his pocket is to that extent an aristocrat; and the woman who wears one on her wrist will find herself becoming punctual.

The accuracy of the Riverside Watches is vouched for by the watch company which is the oldest in America and the largest in the world.

The beauty of these watches you can see for yourself. Let your jeweler help you select one for Christmas.

Waltham Watch Company
Waltham, Mass.

Chapter membership renewal

It's that time again. If you have not renewed your membership for 2018, please take a few minutes to send along the completed form and payment. Your membership is important to us!

Chapter membership

If you've not yet renewed for 2018, please take a few minutes to complete and return the form below.

Chapter 15 Membership Application

New Application / Renewal (circle one)

Membership Dues are \$15

You must be a current, paid NAWCC member to join a Chapter. You may be a member of more than one Chapter.

Please Print or Type

NAME:

SPOUSE'S NAME:

STREET:

CITY:

STATE/COUNTRY: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL:

PHONE:

NAWCC Member #

HOROLOGICAL INTERESTS:

Please send my Chapter newsletter by email.

Make Check Payable to: Chapter 15, NAWCC
Enclose this application and check and send to:

Pat Holloway
1105 Lafayette Lane
Pflugerville TX 78660

Treasurer's Report	
Chapter Account	\$7,672.72
Exp No change	-0.00
Closing Balance	\$7,672.72
Regional Account – no change	\$3,013.60

Upcoming Events

October 21st – Chapter 15 Program

Pat Holloway will present the program called **What else did they do?**

October 22nd – NAWCC webinar – 6 p.m.

Sara Butler-Tongate will present **Studebaker Watch Company: The Rise and Fall of a Mail Order Watch**. Although many of us have heard of Studebaker Watches, Sara's presentation will provide the detail behind the rise and fall of this interesting company. Registration should be available soon at: <https://net.nawcc.org/NAWCC/Events/NAWCC%20Webinars.aspx..>

November 4th – CAWCG and Chapter 15 workshop

Make plans now to attend this one-day jeweler's lathe workshop. You will learn to use and maintain your lathe, sharpen gravers, and practice a few techniques. This is a great opportunity to learn and hone your skills.

November 11th – Chapter 15 Program

Michael Webb will give the presentation at the November meeting.

November 12th – NAWCC webinar – 6 p.m.

Tom McIntyre will give a presentation on **The American Watch Company and the 1876 Centennial**.

MKOA Regional guest

As Jay mentioned in his message, Tom Wilcox, the new NAWCC Executive Director spoke briefly on the first day of the MKOA Regional.



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Spot a clock

These two clocks were spotted at the 2017 MKOA exhibit of advertising clocks. The clocks were made by Edward P. Baird, and the cases were made of pine or oak and the advertising parts were paper-mache. The clock on the left was likely made between 1887 and 1890 when the company was in Montreal. They moved to Plattsburgh NY in 1890. During this time, changes were made to the case and the rosettes on each side were removed. You can learn more about Edward Baird and this interesting company in an article by Jerry Maltz in the August 2008 Bulletin.

As a sidebar, the Finzer Tobacco clock on the left caught my eye, as Finzer also utilized early long wind Waterbury Watch Company watches for advertising purposes.

