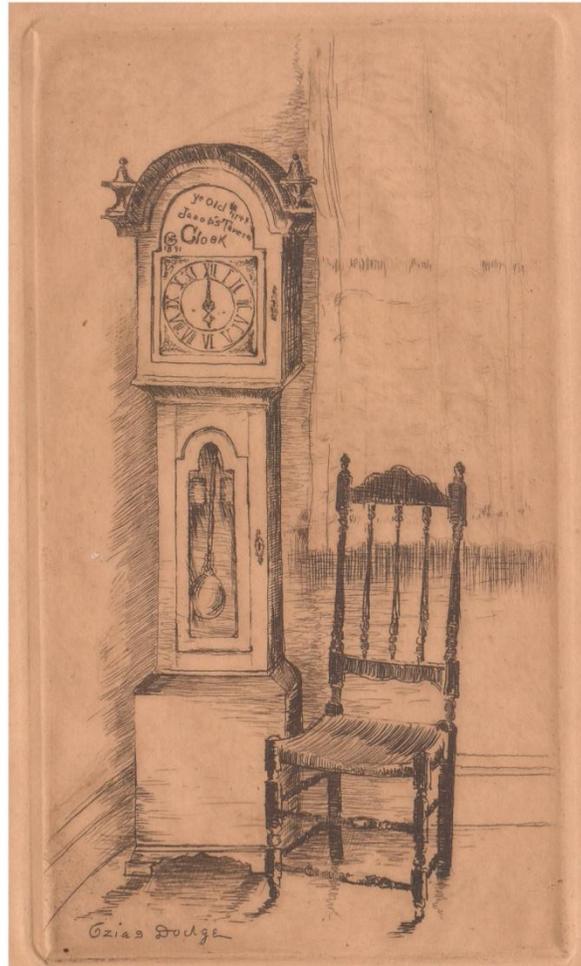


Jacobs Tavern Tall Clock



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Thompson Historical Society

2016

While searching digitized newspapers, on the web, for information pertaining to the Jacobs Tavern of East Thompson, Conn., a news article was stumbled upon, in the February 12, 1892 issue of "The Sun" (New York, N.Y.), which told of an old clock that originally belonged to the Jacobs Family. It stated the clock stood in the hall of the Jacobs Tavern for many years, was in disrepair (in pieces), was obtained from the former tavern building by George W. Carroll (of Norwich, Conn.) and that he signed a contract stating that he would never let the clock go out of his family. At the time Mr. Carroll obtained the clock, it is believed the tavern was no longer in business and had become a private home/farm. The article gave description of the clock and stated that it had been contracted to A.M. Tracey for restoration. Intrigued that a clock of this age and heritage from Thompson might still exist, the article was copied and placed aside for future research and possible discovery of its whereabouts.

In early 2016, the search for the clock began and this started with learning about George W. Carroll, to determine why he had interest in the clock as well as any back ground info on him that might be available. Searching Ancestry.com, it was learned that George W. Carroll was a son of Lucius W. Carroll and Charlotte L. Pope Carroll. Lucius had two sisters, Sarah and Lucy, who had married into the Jacobs family. Sarah married Captain J. D. Jacobs and Lucy married Hale (Hail) M. Jacobs., both great grandsons of Nathaniel Jacobs, the originator of the tavern. In her "First Families of Thompson" article of the Nathaniel Jacobs, Ellen Larned wrote "the last occupant of the name was Hale M. Jacobs". Hale M. died in 1877 and Lucy in 1876 and their daughter, Ann (Jacobs) Joslin, inherited the estate. It is believed, but not proven, that George W. Carroll obtained the clock from Hale's family – possibly his daughter Ann.

Working under the assumption that George honored the contract to never allow the clock to leave the family, the next reasonable step was to find what could be learned about George W. Carroll's life and descendents and possibly determine if the clock had been handed down in the family. Searching Ancestry.com and Findagrave.com, it appears that George W. Carroll was married to Emma F. Briggs and that they had at least one child – George W. Carroll Jr. Further searching on the web did not produce any other pertinent info about George W. Carroll Sr. Neither did inquiries to the Norwich Historical Society.

With no other findings on George Sr., it was back to Ancestry.com to trace his descendents. Multiple family tree sources showed that George W. Carroll Jr. had been married three times and had children with at least two of the wives.

Two children were listed from George Jr.'s marriage to Marie L. Hersey, his first wife. They were G. Wyman (George III) who died in 1965 and Marie L. who died in 2008.

George Jr. and his second wife, Sarah E. Blaisdell, had one unnamed child listed in the family tree used for this research. This typically indicates the person is still alive at the time the family tree was posted. Other than this unnamed person, there was no other information that could lead to more recent descendents of George W. Carroll Sr., so the next step was to possibly locate a recent obituary of either Marie or George III. The goal was to possibly find where they lived and maybe learn names and locations of living relatives. An obituary for Marie was located and it did list her siblings who were located throughout the country. In searching for some of these siblings, a 2015 obituary for her half brother Ira

Green Briggs Carroll Sr., of Sarasota, Fla, was discovered. This obituary listed many more living relatives, increasing the chances of finding information about the clock. At about this time, May 2016, other THS projects caused delay to this project and it was set aside.

A letter was opened in early September 2016, sent from Mr. Robert Bell of Tennessee that included photos of a tall clock. The letter told of how he and his wife were on an antiques shopping trip and that they had found a tall clock, in disrepair, at Smiley's Antique Mall in Micanope, Fla. Attached to the clock was a news article telling about the clock's restoration that intrigued Mr. and Mrs. Bell enough to cause them to purchase it. The face of the clock was engraved "Ye Old Jacobs Tavern Clock" corresponding with the info in the news article. Doing research on the web, Mr. Bell was able to locate some info about the Jacobs Tavern of Thompson, including George Washington having visited the tavern and possibly referenced the time on this clock. This research prompted Mr. Bell to contact THS and inquire as to what we might know of the tavern.

In following up with Mr. Bell and sharing information about the clock and tavern, he stated that after his purchase of the clock, the antique mall had sent him documents that had been with the clock but the dealer forgot to give to him at the time of the purchase. These documents consisted of several cabinet card photos of the clock after its restoration by George W. Carroll Sr., a season's greeting card from George Sr. which showed a sketch of the clock and gave a brief history of it (both these items indicate George Sr.'s interest and pride in the clock) and a photo of a woman believed to be a George Sr. descendent or wife of a descendent. Mr. Bell graciously sent THS one of the cabinet card photos for our photo collection and emailed good photos/scans of the news article, the clock prior to and after Mr. Bell's repairs, the greeting card and the descendent of George Sr.

The newspaper article that is attached to the clock is a different article than the one that was published in "The Sun." While the article does not have a date or the name of the newspaper it was from, it does state "George W. Carroll of this city", "the timepiece was made in England by Thomas George" and "He will have it placed in an old fashioned tall case...". From these statements, we can safely assume that the article was from a paper published in Norwich prior to the article published in "The Sun" and that the original case was so far in disrepair that the works were placed into a newer case. It is possible that this "newer" case was already an antique at that time).

Mr. Bell purchased the clock in pieces with the intent to put it back together and make it function. Only one of the five brass finials was present, so he reproduced five new finials in wood and gilded them to appear as the original brass piece. He is of the opinion that the clock works, seat board, square dial face, pendulum and weights are original to the clock. The balance of the parts is from the 1891 restoration, including the larger brass plate on which the original square plate is attached. This "newer" plate, from the 1891 restoration, is engraved "Ye Old Jacobs Tavern Clock", N over J with 1741 (for Nathaniel Jacobs) and G over W over C with 1891 (for George W. Carroll).

According to the greeting card, produced by George W. Sr., Thomas George was a clock maker from "The Strand" London and specialized in one hand clocks from 1690 to 1740. The clock was given to Mary Jacobs, by her father, as a wedding gift when she married Nathaniel Jacobs in 1725. The clock stood in

the front hall of the tavern and during a severe thunder storm the house and clock were struck by lightning and the hand of the clock was broken. It remained in the attic of the tavern for many years until obtained by the Carroll family in 1891.

The last piece of the puzzle was to determine how the clock ended up in Smiley's Antique Mall. A call was placed to Smiley's to inquire about this and, after leaving a message, we received a call from Mrs. Ashley Carroll, wife of Andrew Carroll and daughter-in-law of Ira Green Briggs Carroll. She stated that her father in law was a grandson of George W. Carroll, Sr. and her family owns and operates Smiley's Antique Mall. After her initial surprise about the background of the clock, she explained what had occurred. After the death of Mr. I.G. Briggs Carroll, his three sons's inventoried his estate and sorted all items, taking what they wanted and dispersing the balance elsewhere. Some of the items dispersed were appraised and were then placed for sale in the antique mall, the clock being one of these items. The initial appraisal of the clock stated that it was not very old and, because of its disrepair, would require more money for repairs than it would likely sell for. Prior to its being placed for sale, another appraisal was performed and the report was similar to the first appraisal. Unfortunately, nobody had seen the news article attached to the clock case and George Sr.'s commitment to not allowing the clock to leave the family. Had the article been seen, the clock would not have gone up for sale. Given the modifications made in 1892 – the new case and brass face – it is understandable that the actual age of the face, works, pendulum and weights was missed by the appraisers.

As of October of 2016, the clock has been refurbished, cleaned and is now in good working order. It keeps accurate time and chimes on the hour.

A RARE OLD CLOCK.

It Used to Stand in the Jacobs Tavern, and It Told the Time to Gen. Putnam.

Nonwch, Feb. 11.—The handsomest and most interesting old-fashioned clock in eastern Connecticut belongs to Mr. George W. Carroll of this city.

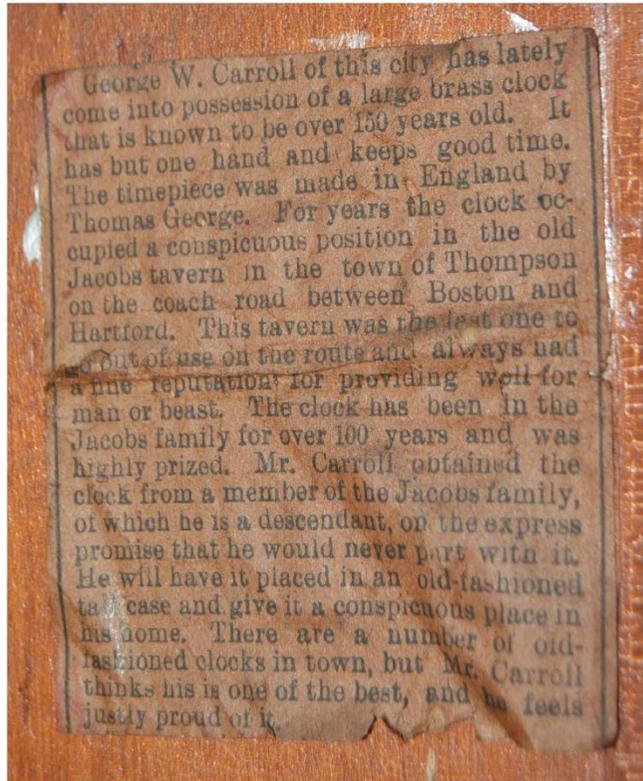
The clock originally was the property of the Jacobs family and for years stood in an angle of the hall in the famous old Jacobs Tavern in the country town of Thompson, in Windham county, on the ancient stage road between Hartford and Boston. This tavern not only was a noted inn long before the Revolution, but one of the latest survivors of the quaint, old-style Connecticut stage-coach taverns, and while the building is still extant it is now used for a farmhouse. After it ceased to be a tavern the old clock was packed away in its attic, and in a few years the timepiece fell all to pieces. Not long ago Mr. Carroll made out to get possession of it, but he had to sign a contract agreeing never to let the piece go out of his family. He brought the clock to Norwich in baskets.

It was a long and difficult job to restore the timepiece, and A. M. Tracy has done the job well. It has a solid and massive cherry case, highly polished, that is seven feet high. Its face is of polished pale brass, and there is only one hand; but the dial plate is ingeniously scored with time divisions, so that it is easy to determine not only the hour, but minute parts of it at a glance. The dial plate is environed with a wide, shining brass border, on which is inscribed in old-style letters: "Ye Jacobs Tavern, 1741—1801." And there are monograms of the original and present owners that were added by Mr. Tracy. The long, solemn-ticking pendulum is of beautifully polished brass, as are also the great weights, weighing eighteen pounds each, that dangle at the end of cords heavy enough to tie up a sailboat with. The top of the square, broad headpiece of cherry is surmounted by four massive brass ornaments—globes merging into arrow-shaped pointers like plummets.

The old clock keeps time accurately and is as useful as it is ornamental and historical. Its tick is slow, sedate, and dignified, and there is a hollow, sonorous, almost muffled ring about its intonation strikingly different from the alert, wideawake, or jerky click-clack of modern timepieces.

The old Jacobs Tavern was only a few miles from Pomfret, where Gen. Israel Putnam—"Old Put"—of the Revolution—dwelt on his hard and stony farm, and the bluff old Continental soldier frequented the inn. Many a time did he stare into the clock's face and did it tell him the hour of the day.

Newspaper article from "The Sun" - page three of the February 12, 1892 issue



Newspaper article, possibly Norwich Bulletin, which was attached to the case of the clock. Based on the information in the article, this predates the article in "The Sun".



Y^e Old ^{N.J. 1741}
Jacob's Tavern
Clock
a.w.c.
1891

This clock was made by Thomas George, a specialist in one hand clocks from 1690 to 1740, at his shop in "the Strand" London. It was given to Mary Jacobs by her father as a wedding present when she married Nathaniel Jacobs in 1725 and emigrated to this country.

In 1741 Nathaniel Jacobs moved to East Thompson with his wife and five sons. His house then became a welcome resting place to many a weary traveler and was widely known as the half way house on the Post Road between Hartford and Boston.

This clock for many years stood in the front hall to welcome its many guests, and during a severe thunder storm the house and clock were both struck by lightning and the hand of the clock was broken.

For many years it lay unused in the attic of the Tavern. In 1891 it was inherited by the Carroll family who restored it and have used it ever since.

It is one of the very few One Hand Clocks that is now known to be in existence.

*The Seasons Greetings
from
Mr. and Mrs. George Wyman Carroll
Norwich
Connecticut*

Greeting card which was sent to Mr. Bell, from Smiley's Antique Shop, after he purchased the clock



The cabinet card photo of the clock after the 1892 "restoration"

The clock as it appears today - Oct. 2016





Lucy Carroll Jacobs
Thompson Historical Society
Thompson, Ct.



Sarah Carroll Jacobs
Thompson Historical Society
Thompson, Ct.



Lucius Carroll Family
Thompson Historical Society
Thompson, Ct.

Lucius Wyman Carroll Charlotte Lathe Pope Carroll Adams P. Carroll Emma Francis Briggs Carroll George W. Carroll
George W. Carroll Jr.

