

My Ongoing Obsession with Baird Advertising Clocks

BY JERRY MALTZ, NAWCC FELLOW (NY)

Introduction

I have been a passionate collector of advertising clocks for many years (Figure 1). It has been 25 years since my book *Baird Advertising Clocks* was published.¹ The book contains photos and descriptions of more than 70 different clocks. In August 2008, an addendum of 17 different Baird advertising clocks was published in the *Bulletin*.² Since that time I have found several more Baird clocks, all described here.

Edward Payson Baird

Edward Payson Baird was born in Philadelphia, PA, on January 26, 1860. At the age of 15 he left school and went to work for William Torrey and Co., which was owned by his mother's relative. The company produced packing boxes. More than likely this company produced wooden packing boxes for the Seth Thomas Clock Co. It was there that Baird encountered Seth Thomas Jr., the son of Seth Thomas, the clockmaker. Baird then worked for the Seth Thomas Clock Co. from 1879 to 1887. Subsequently, he became the general manager of the Electro-Mechanical Clock Co., Ltd., in Montreal, Canada.

In 1887, the Baird Clock Mfg. Co. was formed in Montreal. He established a sales office in New York City as well. Baird made wooden cases and doors for advertising clocks. He used clock movements made exclusively by the Seth Thomas Co. and advertised as such to ensure the quality of his clocks and guarantee larger sales. In later years he used other companies' clock movements as well.

Business grew, and in July 1890, Baird moved from Montreal to Plattsburgh, NY. In addition to being the proprietor of his company, Baird was also the salesman and traveled throughout the US, England, and Ireland to promote his product. After his company was sold at public auction in 1896, Baird established the Baird Manufacturing Co. of Chicago in 1897. He produced the same kind of wooden case but changed to stamping and embossing the advertisement on tin (similar to a license plate) instead of using papier-mâché. These clocks did not sell well and few were produced, bringing an end to Baird's clockmaking enterprise after only one year in Chicago. He died on October 23, 1929, at the age of 69.

All of the standard Baird clocks pictured here are 30 ½" long and have an 18 ½" wide top door, 12" wide



Figure 1. (left) A clock-filled wall in the Maltz home in 2007 and (right) the same wall in 2023. AUTHOR'S PHOTOS.

bottom door, and a 12" dial. All other clocks have their own statistics listed. The papier-mâché clocks were made between 1891 and 1895. The clocks made in Chicago were produced in 1896. The iron time clock was made in the early 1900s.

Brooklyn Baseball

I remember that night like it was yesterday. It was a rainy night and my wife, Millie, and I drove 45 minutes from our home in New Rochelle to New York City, to Leland's Auction House to bid on the Brooklyn clock (Figure 2). The auction room was full, perhaps 200 sports fans anxiously awaiting the clock to come up. The clock was placed in a glass case, and I asked the attendant to open the door so I could examine it. It took me all of 10 seconds to know the clock was original: great paint, full label, correct pendulum, and a fine dial. The baseball protruded about 2" from the flat surface of the bottom door. Twenty minutes later, my dream of owning the clock was gone. I never got the chance to bid. The opening bid was much higher than I wanted to spend. The bidding continued until the hammer was brought down at \$15,000, which did not include the auction commission.

Now, this is a mystery. In January 1896 the Baird Clock Co.'s assets were sold at auction; was Edward P. Baird a clairvoyant? Did his middle initial stand for Prognosticator? Could he predict that the Brooklyn baseball team would become champions three years later? Of course not.

This is my theory. Someone, most likely an old employee who still had access to the machinery and was a great baseball fan, made the clock. Possibly he was a friend or relative of the club's manager, Ned Hanlon, who later was voted into baseball's hall of fame in Cooperstown, NY.

Today, the clock resides in the Sports Museum of Los Angeles, commonly called "Cooperstown West."

Clock & Eagle

I have dubbed this clock the "Dwarf Baird" (Figure 3). It measures just 18" tall, 9" wide, with a 5" dial. There is only a 9" drop from the arbor to the center of the pendulum. It is pictured alongside an elongated 35" tall Baird with the same advertising. There are no other "Dwarf Bairds" known to exist.

Hudson Clothier

Figure 4 shows an advertisement from the *Plattsburgh [NY] Directory* from 1891. The clock measures 18 ½" in diameter.



Figure 2. Brooklyn Baseball Club clock. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



Figure 3. The "Dwarf Baird" clock. PHOTO BY PHIL LARIVIERE.

J. L. Hudson Clothier was founded by Joseph Lowthian Hudson in 1881 as an upscale department store. Hudson was born in 1846 in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. The store was located on Woodward Avenue in downtown Detroit. It was the tallest department store in the world at the time, consisting of 25 stories, four basements, and 59 elevators. In 1909, Hudson invested in a start-up automobile company that was named Hudson in his honor. He passed away in 1912.

In addition to the clothing advertising clocks shown in this article, many other clothing stores used Baird clocks to advertise their merchandise:

Montreal Clocks: J. P. Becker's Department Bazaar

Plattsburg Clocks: Baltimore Clothiers (Harrisburg, PA); Carwalho Clothiers (Keokuk, IA); Gusky's (Pittsburgh, PA); Marshall & Ball (Newark, NJ); McAdams & Berry's (Richmond, VA); New York Clothing House (Baltimore, MD); Simpson Bros. (Chattanooga, TN & Birmingham, AL); J. Stern & Sons (Quincy, IL); Strauss Bros. (Chicago, IL); Woolf (Chicago, IL); Wootten, Hayes & Harris (Denison, TX); Ead's Neal (Macon, GA); Houseman, Donnally & Jones (Grand Rapids, MI); McGregor & Co. (Newark, NJ); Saks & Co. (Washington, DC)³

F. W. Humphrey & Co.

Frank Waterman Humphrey was born in 1853 and died in 1909. He was a lifelong member of the Elks Lodge. F. W. Humphrey Clothiers operated from the mid-1880s to 1903 on the northeast corner of Broadway and Pine Street in St. Louis, MO.

The Humphrey clock advertisement in Figure 5 is from the journal *Printer's Ink* (March 30, 1892). It proudly proclaims that Baird Clock Co. had "fourteen leading Clothing Houses among our customers."

Mammoth Shoe and Clothing Co.

Mammoth Shoe and Clothing Co. was run by partners Horace Kleinhans (1852–1903) and De Calvus Simonson (1851–1934). The store was located at 424–434 West Market Street in Louisville, KY (Figure 6). Their advertisement in the *Louisville Courier Journal* (March 26, 1893) proclaims, "For \$8 and \$10 you can buy a really lovely overcoat. For \$12 and \$15 you have pick of hundreds of the finest overcoats ever seen in the city."

In 1898 the three-story building was devoured by fire. Kleinhans and Simonson were insured for the business, which never opened again. The building was rebuilt and leased to H. Giershoper, who opened a new clothing store, the Louisville Clothing Store.

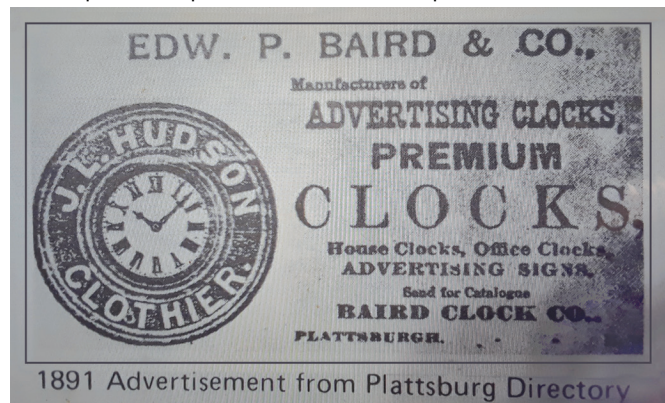


Figure 4. An 1891 ad for Baird clocks, showing a Hudson Clothier clock, printed in the *Plattsburgh Directory*.



Figure 5. F. W. Humphrey & Co. clock ad in *Printer's Ink* (March 30, 1892).

Adolph Newsalt Jeweler

Adolph Newsalt was born in Prussia in 1848 and died in 1921.

After his father died when Newsalt was nine, he and his mother moved to New York City. He later began his apprenticeship as a jeweler in Lacrosse, WI, in 1860. In 1864 he moved to Dayton, OH, and worked for two years in other jewelers' stores before taking his \$300 in savings and starting his own business on Fifth Street in Dayton (Figure 7). In time Newsalt's business flourished and he opened a second store at Main and Fourth Streets. This second store was considered the "most complete and best designed in the country."⁴ The business outlived its founder and closed in 1928.



Figure 6. Mammoth Shoe & Clothing Co. clock. COURTESY OF THE CLOCK BROTHERS.



Figure 7. Adolph Newsalt clock. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



Figure 8. Palace Clothing Co. clock. PHOTO BY JOHN KELCHNER.

Palace Clothing Co.

The clock claims that Palace Clothing Co. is the "Largest and Best Store" (Figure 8). The store opened in 1889, and was operated by the manager Maurice I. Rothchild. It was located at 43 Washington Avenue N., Minneapolis. A second location was opened in 1893 at 315-323 Nicolett Avenue. In 1949 it merged with the Young Quinlan Co., which had been established in 1926. The store ceased operations in April 1945.

Sanitary Cigars

B. C. Horn operated Sanitary Cigars, located on the corner of Front and Clay Streets in San Francisco. Horn was elected to the San Francisco City Council and was also the president of the Alameda Railroad.

An advertisement from the *Daily British Columbia Newspaper* of July 3, 1867, reads "500,000 Cigars @ \$5.00 Per Thousand." Another ad states, "The Facilities For Importing From Virginia and Havana Can Not Be Excelled By Any Establishment On The Pacific Coast."

Some names of the cigars Horn sold were Forest Rose, Liberty Boy, Sunnyside, Nature's Bounty, and Atlantic Cable. The Sanitary Cigar clock (Figure 9) promotes cigars with "No Flavoring" and "No Poisonous Drugs."

Shonfield & Friedrich

The original Shonfield advertisement clock was made with a flaw (Figure 10). The word "Clothiers" on the top door was missing the letter "s." Shonfield

took possession of the clock and had an artist print the missing letter onto the flat surface of the door.

The Shonfield clock was purchased from Baird in 1894, and a year or two later a partner was added to the firm. The new clock advertised Shonfield & Friedrich (Figure 11). This time "Clothiers" was correctly spelled.

J. H. Sielcken & Co. Teas, Coffees, Spices

John Herman Sielcken was born in Germany in 1847 and died while vacationing there in 1922. His occupation was accounting, and presumably he saw the potential profits to be made from running his own coffee business, which was located in San Francisco in the early 1890s (Figure 12).

In later years his business partner was George W. Crossman. The firm Crossman and Sielcken operated out of New York City.

Streissguth Clothing Co.

Otto Streissguth was born in 1854 in New Glarus, WI, and died in Milwaukee in 1930. He opened his first store in April 1891 on the northeast corner of State and Third in Milwaukee. In 1895, the company moved to a larger store at Grand Avenue and Second Street (Figure 13).

Three ads for the company were printed in the *Milwaukee Journal*.⁵ One ad from May 3, 1901, proclaimed that the name "Streissguth" was pronounced "Stricegooth." Another advertisement from May 3, 1901, announced that free tickets to all

home games of the Milwaukee Brewers would be given away with a purchase of \$3.00 or more. Then in January 1903, the newspaper released a statement announcing the closing of the Streissguth store and the sale of the remaining merchandise by the company Stumpf & Langhoff.

Thurber Whyland

Figure 14 shows an extremely rare time-and-strike movement stamped by the F. Kroeber Clock Co. of New York. The only other Baird advertising clock with this same movement is the *Pittsburg Times* clock pictured in the *Bulletin*.⁶ The style of the case is a short drop schoolhouse design measuring 27 ¾" tall and 18 ½" wide, and it has a 12" wide bottom door with a 2 ½" window to view the pendulum.

Horace Kingsley Thurber was born in Delhi, NY, in 1828 and passed away in 1899. He became involved in the food business in 1857. In the early 1870s, Thurber paid \$19,000 for a triangular block of property on West Broadway and Reade Street in New York City, where he built a warehouse for his wholesale grocery business. The red brick neo-Grecian building, at the corner of 16 Hudson Street, was completed in 1874. On the third floor, a round-faced clock was built into the masonry.

In 1874, Thurber partnered with Whyland, and the new company of Thurber Whyland & Co. was formed with branch offices in France and England. Thurber diversified in 1886 to invest in coal mines in west Texas. The town of Thurber, TX, was named after him.

In 1918, long after Thurber's death, Thurber Whyland marketed tobacco by having boys collect cigar bands and offering free cigars and cash as an incentive to promote their product.

In 1984, the original New York City company building was converted into luxury apartments.

Welch's Magic Tea

The company was founded in Vineland, NJ, in 1869 by Thomas Branwell Welch and his son, Charles Welch, who was a practicing dentist.

Vineland was founded in 1861 by Philadelphia land developer Charles K. Landis to create his own



Figure 9. Sanitary Cigar clock. PHOTO BY JOHN KELCHNER.



Figure 10. Shonfield Clothiers clock. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



Figure 11. Shonfield & Friedrich Clothiers clock. PHOTO BY JOEL ZAREMSKY.

alcohol-free utopian society. He offered Italian grape growers 20 acres of land to be cleared and used to grow grapes. The clock in Figure 15 promotes Welch's Magic Tea as the cure for headaches, malaria, and constipation as well as for problematic complexions!

The company's product changed to Welch's grape juice in 1893. In 1956, the company was sold to the National Grape Cooperative.

Winchester Repeating Arms Co.

The founder of the company was Oliver Winchester, who was born in 1810 and died in 1880. His business experience began with making men's shirts, but he



Figure 12. J. H. Sielcken & Co. clock.
PHOTO BY PHIL LARIVIERE.

later became the largest stockholder of the New Haven Arms Co. of Bridgeport, CT. In 1857, Winchester bought a controlling interest in the Volcanic Repeating Arms Co. from Horace Smith and Daniel B. Wesson. On May 22, 1866, the Winchester Repeating Arms Co. was established and produced the first reliable lever-action repeating rifle (Figure 16). The first gun to bear the name Winchester was called Yellow Boy.

The company moved to New Haven, CT, in 1871. In 1873, the model 1873 was produced and sales exceeded 700,000; it was known as "The Gun That Won the West." In 1939, the company produced 47,000 Browning Automatic Rifles, commonly called the BAR. Every combat infantry squad had two BAR men. In 1939, the company began manufacturing the M1 Garand. By the end of World War II, over 6 million rifles had been produced, and the company employed more than 60,000 workers. In 1960, the company manufactured 1.3 million M14 rifles for the military. In 1989, however, the company went bankrupt and was acquired by the Belgian arms maker Fabrique National Herstal.

Chicago Clocks

Buffos Cigar

Sam Woodside, whose name appears on the clock (Figure 17), was a wholesaler of tobacco and cigars. He was born in Ireland in 1833 and died in 1901. He served as a Union soldier in the Civil War.



Figure 14. Thurber Whyland Co. clock.
PHOTO BY OLIVIA MALTZ.

Figure 13. Streissguth Clothing Co. clock.
PHOTO BY PHIL LARIVIERE.



Figure 15. Welch's Magic Tea clock.
COURTESY OF DELANEY ANTIQUE CLOCKS.

This is a very rare, double-sided bracket hanging clock made in Chicago in 1896, hung from a custom wrought-iron sconce. The case measures 44 ½" tall and 19" wide, with a depth of 7". The Seth Thomas No. 86, 30-day movement has a custom arbor and wheels to accommodate the second pair of hands. It is stamped "Made for the Baird Clock Co".

The advertisements, like all of Baird's Chicago clocks, were made with embossed tin. The front and rear ads on the clock are identical.

The front dial has two winding holes and has "Leased from the Baird Clock Co" printed on it. The second dial has the same message.

Rather than purchase the clock, Sam Woodside Co. distributors could get the clock without charge. Included in the arrangement was an agreement that the clock would be serviced by a local jeweler. In return, Woodside would pay a monthly fee to the Baird Clock Co.

The name "E. Seidenberg Stiefel & Co" appears on the advertisement; no information could be found related to that name.



Figure 16. Winchester clock. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.

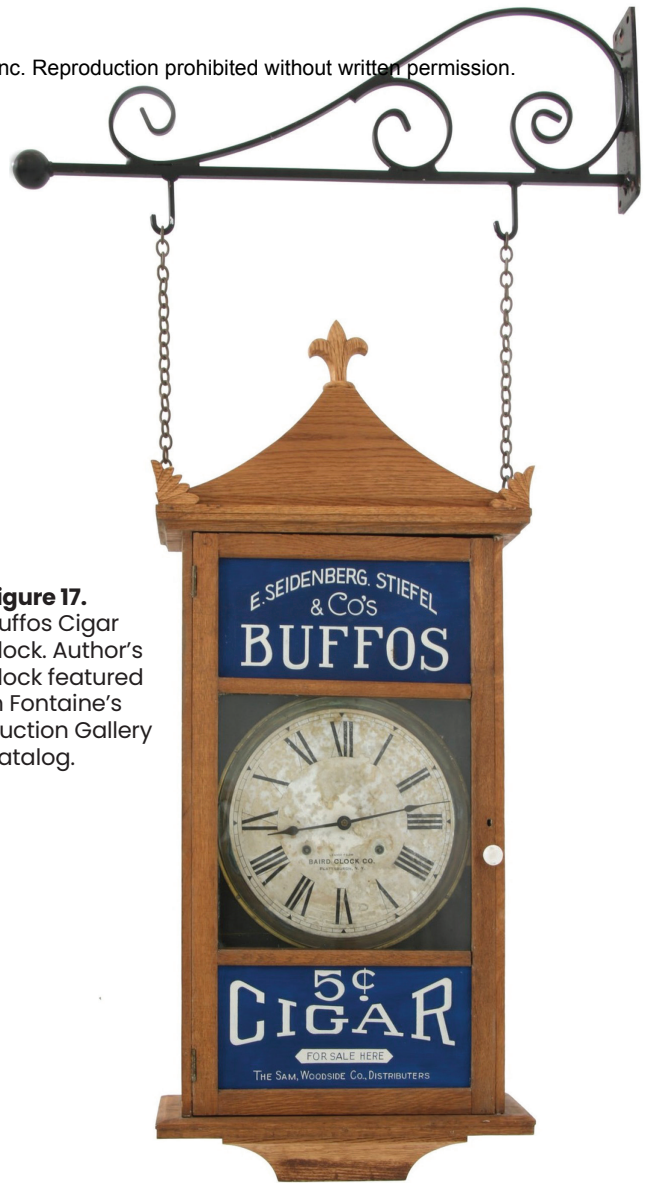


Figure 17. Buffos Cigar clock. Author's clock featured in Fontaine's Auction Gallery catalog.

PRINTERS' INK.

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Figure 18. Daily News window clock.



Figure 19. Royal Tailoring clock: **A.** The view that pedestrians saw as they passed the store. **B.** This dial was placed in front of a mirror so the customers in the store could read it correctly. PHOTOS BY BOB KOLBECK.

Daily News

The image in Figure 18 is from the *Chicago Daily News*. Melville Elijah Stone (1848–1929) founded the newspaper, which was published from 1876 to 1978.

This *Daily News* clock is the identical type of Chicago tin window clock as the Royal Tailoring clock shown here.

Royal Tailoring

A double-sided tin advertising clock produced in Chicago in 1897 promoted Royal Tailoring (Figure 19). The Royal Tailoring Clothing Co. was located in New York City and Chicago. This clock was designed to be hung in a store window to attract passing pedestrians.

The embossed dial measured 19 ½" in diameter. The reverse-side dial with the numbers placed in reverse was only 5 ½" in diameter, with a winding hole at the number 8. The clock was placed in front of a mirror so the customers inside the store could read it correctly. This dial was not embossed.

Three posts were drilled into the bezel at the numbers 11, 1, and 6. A wire was attached to the posts and then attached to nail heads on the ceiling and on a base below. This prevented the clock from moving side to side while the pendulum was in motion.

Truth Cigars

Frank R. Rice was the owner of Truth Cigars at 305 N. 4th Street in St. Louis, MO, until 1932. He was born in Michigan in 1843. Rice served in the Union Army and lost a leg during the Battle of Fredericksburg.

In the latter part of the 19th century, St. Louis was the largest tobacco and cigar manufacturer in the United States. The company known as F. R. Rice Tobacco was established in 1892. The price of a Rice cigar called the Mercantile was 10 cents. Another cigar called the 305, named for his address, sold for 5 cents.

The two-sided clock with a flat bottom and top was placed on a counter to be seen by customers walking in and around a store (Figure 20). This clock may have been leased in the same way as the Buffos cigar clock (see above).

The clock measured 38" tall, 19" wide, and 7" deep. The clock most likely had a Seth Thomas movement, but I believe it was only the 8-day type unlike the Buffos cigar 30-day clock that had to be wound while standing on a ladder.

Rice also made fancy glass humidors to keep his cigars fresh. They are very collectible today.



Figure 20. Truth Cigar clock.



Figure 21. Baird chronograph, next to eyeglasses and some good beer for size comparison. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.

Baird Time Clock

In the early 1900s, businesses were growing and factories employed hundreds of workers. Time clocks to track workers' hours were needed. The Baird time clocks (Figure 21) were made of iron, weighed 16 ½ pounds, and measured 8 ½" high, 7 ½" deep, and 6 ½" wide. Baird's time stamp was patented on December 25, 1894 (no. US531297A). The clock in Figure 21 is serial number 3567; this high number was most likely meant to impress potential customers. Baird's time clock venture was unsuccessful and very few of these clocks were produced.

Novelty Clocks

Crystal Palace



This is a glass paperweight mantel clock featured in an 1893 English newspaper ad (Figure 22). Baird used the London address 181 Victoria Street while promoting sales in England. The ad describes the clock as being 3 ½" tall, containing a Seth Thomas movement, and available with or without advertising. This particular clock advertised "Moral - Accidents Will Happen, Insure In The Travelers."

Figure 22. Crystal Palace clock ad (1893).

The Monitor

This clock (Figure 23) was featured in an advertisement from *Printers Ink* (November 17, 1897), displaying a combination desk, memo, calendar, and pencil rack. The clock is 7 ½" square. The ad says that Baird can print any advertisement on a clock's dial and label or on the memo pad if the customer purchases a large number. A single clock cost \$1.25. Baird's address is listed as 140 Clinton Street in Chicago. A 1907 *Printers Ink* ad lists the company's address as 30 Michigan Street, Chicago.

Figure 23. Monitor clock ad from *Printers Ink* (November 17, 1897).



Conclusion

It has been nearly 50 years since I bought my first Baird advertising clock. Earlier this year I purchased another Baird clock. The excitement is still the same, and the best feeling is when I find a Baird clock that I never knew existed. While writing this article, I found five of these rare clocks. Hopefully more will be located in the future and an addendum will be needed in the *Bulletin*!

Acknowledgment

Many thanks are due to Millie, my wonderful wife of 62 years, who greatly assisted with the preparation of this article.

Notes and References

1. Jerry Maltz, *Baird Advertising Clocks* (self-pub., Jostens, 1998).
2. Jerry Maltz, "Baird Clock Co.: The Clocks and the Companies That Advertised," *NAWCC Bulletin* 50, no. 375 (August 2008): 418–24.
3. See Maltz, *Baird Advertising Clocks* and "Baird Clock Co."
4. Frank Conover, ed., *Centennial Portrait and Biographical Record of the City of Dayton and of Montgomery County, Ohio* (Logansport, IN: A. W. Bowen & Co., 1897), 312–15, www.daytonhistorybooks.com/page/page/1606711.htm.
5. Streissguth Clothing Co. ads were located by Daniel Lee, local historian, Milwaukee Public Library.
6. Maltz, "Baird Clock Co.," 423. The "h" in today's spelling of *Pittsburgh* was left off the newspaper's title and the clock.

About the Author

Jerry Maltz is a US Army veteran and an infantry BAR man. He was formerly the proprietor of a trucking business and then an employee of a Fortune 500 company. Now retired, Jerry shares his passion for clock collecting with his wife, Millie. He is a member of three NAWCC Chapters and a former president of New York Chapter 2. He has attended every NAWCC National Convention since 1983 and is the author of *Baird Advertising Clocks*. In 2018, Jerry became an NAWCC Fellow.