

So Where Do I Go To Learn About My Clock?

Part 1 of 2 articles on education sources

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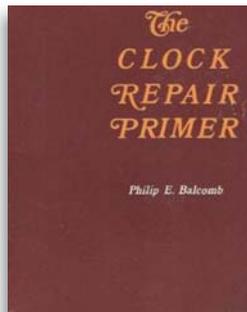
I have had folks ask, both via computer and in person, “where can I go to learn about my clock?”; by “learn” they meant “some version of repair.” The nice thing about access to information via new technology is that older materials and methods are still around if you hunt for them. Today there are many more choices and opportunities than there were 20 years ago. “Where to go” can be any of the following: books, electronic articles, electronic queries, video or DVD instruction, person-to-person amongst friends (NAWCC chapter meetings), classes and courses, and finally professional clock repairers.

Books and Articles

My own instructor, John Guerin, suggested Philip Balcomb's *The Clock Repair Primer: The Beginner's Handbook* and *The Clock Repair First Reader: Second Steps for the Beginner* 15 years ago. These are user-friendly, even for absolute beginners. Philip Balcomb (1916-1998) was a prolific writer for the NAWCC *Bulletin*, publishing more than 30 articles between April 1981 and December 1990. The *Clock Repair Primer* was serialized in the *Bulletin* from February 1985 to April 1986 (numbers 234 through 241). Today you can sign in to nawcc.org and access these articles electronically.

Access to the *Bulletin* archive is an enormous benefit to NAWCC members. And yet, although my complete collection of *Bulletins* occupies many feet of shelf space, I don't think I'll be getting rid of them. I still like to hold the actual publication (you cannot jot notes down in the margins of the “virtual” article!).

My next recommendation is



to acquire the spiral-bound books by Steven G. Conover, author of the *Clockmakers Newsletter*. His monthly newsletter was focused on repair and was published from 1987 through 2008—256 issues. I acquired the complete set of back issues for reference—

are you starting to notice a pattern? Acquiring clock repair information is not as easy as running down to the hardware store to ask the person in an apron for pointers! Steven synthesized his articles into nine books, from *Clock Repair: Basics* to *Building an American Clock Movement*. Steven's line drawings and photographs wonderfully illustrate the text.

Next, I suggest a baker's dozen of books that all serve as good references, each with pluses and minuses. When you are stuck on a difficult or unique repair, and one of these authors has included a few lines that answers your specific question, you'll

think the book is worth its weight in spare clock gears!

Another great service through the NAWCC is the Lending Library; you may borrow a specific book to research your question or examine the book before purchasing it for your library. Publication dates for these books span 99 years. Remember that the common antique clock didn't change much, but the recommended and generally approved methods of repair have progressed in a century. We don't normally use open cans of gasoline to clean off parts anymore, and punching oblong pivot holes is no longer done. I have acquired ten of the 13 books listed here based on the recommendations of others and found them to have been good suggestions. They are listed here chronologically by publication date.

The Modern Clock – A Study of Time Keeping Mechanism: Its Construction, Regulation and Repair by Ward L. Goodrich. At least six editions / 11 printings, first published in 1905.

Practical Clock Repairing by Donald de Carle, four editions, first published in 1952.

Clock & Watch Repairing by Donald de Carle, four editions, first published in 1959.

Hoey's Pendulum Clock Repair and Service Manual by Robert J. Hoey, 1971.

Repairing Antique Pendulum Clocks by H. Jendritzki, 1973.



The Best of Jesse Coleman by Jesse E. Coleman, compiled by Orville Hagens, 1979, from 40 years of Coleman's "Questions & Answers" and "Clockwise & Otherwise" columns in the American Watchmakers Institute *Horology Times*.)

Questions and Answers of and for the Clockmaking Profession by Joseph G. Baier, James L. Tigner, and Marvin E. Whitney, 1981.

Repairing and Restoring Pendulum Clocks by John Plewes, two editions, first published 1984.

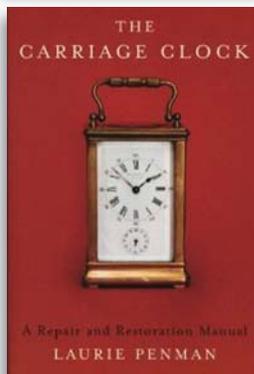
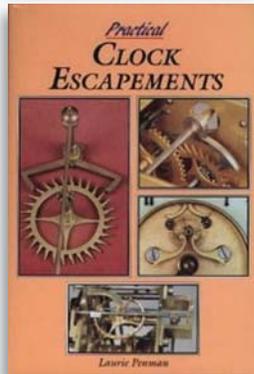
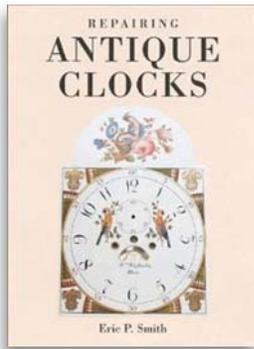
This Old Clock – Class Notes in Clock Repair by David Goodman, 1990.

Repairing Antique Clocks by Eric P. Smith, two editions, first published 1993.

Restoring Grandfather Clocks by Eric & Brian Smith, published 1995.

Practical Clock Escapements by Laurie Penman, 1998.

The Carriage Clock: A Repair and Restoration Manual by Laurie Penman, 2004.



post just about any inquiry and someone out there will be able to assist you. (Some people, myself included, don't check the Board every day, and so you might have to wait a bit to have a really unique question answered.) As of this writing, under Clock Repair there are 10,437 message threads and 106,765 messages, for American Pocket Watches there are 14,492 threads and 106,081 messages. Posted messages must be related to horology, no for sale or business ads may be posted, and no appraisals may be given. A new service for members is 4Sale\$NAWCC.org where NAWCC members post three free ads at a time, with two photographs per ad.

In addition, there are many Internet users' groups where you can find those who have interests similar to yours. Yahoo Groups host a great number of these horology-related groups; others are

sprinkled across the Internet.

Groups on Yahoo include:

synchronome,
gustavbecker,
clocks,
clocksgroup,
clocksmiths,
clockard,
clocksandwatches,
horology,
cuckoo'clockcorner,
scrollsawclocks,

cuckoo'clockclub,
ATMOS_Clocks,
pigeonclockcollectors,
antique_electric_clocks,
SMWC,
standardelectricclocks,
and blackforestclocks,
to name a few.

Video and DVD Information and Instruction

The NAWCC has done membership a great service by online videos in the "NAWCC Digital Video Archive." Here you will find over 110 offerings, from 541D "The Engle Clock: An American Monumental" to 893D "Evolution of the Tower Clock." The Lending Library also has hundreds that you may check out for the cost of postage.

Distance Learning opportunities are abundant. The NAWCC has compiled a list of some programs under "Learning to Repair Clocks and Watches," located at <http://www.nawcc-index.net/Repair-Learning.php>, including "The AWCI Home Study Course in Clock Repair." You may want to take advantage of your various message board opportunities to learn the likes and dislikes of others before you commit to a course of learning.

Part 2 of this discussion will include:

- Person-to-person inquiries amongst friends at NAWCC Chapter meetings or others eager to share and discuss with you.
- Classes and courses.
- Approaching the clock and watch repair professional.

Electronic Queries

Post Your Question and Someone Is Sure to Help

There are great sources on the Internet that allow you to easily connect with others and share your questions, parts hunting, manufacturer's histories, model names and dates, and the like. The first place to start is the NAWCC Message Board. You can

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Symposium information begins on page 376.

Symposium information continues on page 462.