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Tick! Tock!

Clocks Mark Time Through the Centuries

by Stella Mae Brinkman

The hours and days went by. Time markers
fort involved in the work or if he were
of noble birth.

During the sixteenth century Italian,
Nuremberg and Augsburg clockmakers
developed clocks so intricate that they
showed phases of the moon, the year,
the day of the month and the festivals
of the church. They made striking
clocks and even invented the great-grandfather of our early morning moni-
tor, the alarm clock.

Perhaps the most wonderful clock is
the one in the Strasbourg Cathedral in
Germany. It shows the motions of the
sun, moon and planets; it marks years,
months and important days in the
year. In the upper part of the clock
are four aged men who strike the
quarter hours. At each quarter-hour
Death comes out to strike, but Christ,
spear in hand, drives him back. The
last quarter comes. Christ goes inside,
and Death with a bone in his hand,
strikes the hour. The chimes ring out.

Artists seized the opportunity for
elaborate decoration in ornamenting
clocks for the wealthy. Some of the
ancient ones are epitomes of legendary
lore. In France during
the period of
Renaissance, clock cases were de-
veloped into the finest form of art. The
pendulum was introduced in the
clock making, and for the next hundred
years the English worked at perfecting
the clock movements and the artistry
of the cases. Throughout the nine-
teenth century these skilled craftsmen
strove to maintain supremacy over the
products of the factory system.

Clockmaking came to America with
the New England colonists. Simon
Willard, the most famous of the Wil-
lard clockmaking family, started in the
business about the time of the Revolu-
tion. His mechanical genius was di-
rected towards providing his country-
men with a cheap, yet good, clock. The
tower clocks in the Capitol at Washing-
ton and the old State House in Boston
are of his production.

The year 1796 brought new competi-
tion for the clockmaker when Eli Terry
produced the first machine-made
clocks. The brass clock, invented by
Chauncey Jerome, soon replaced those
with wooden movements. By 1842 his
industry had expanded so greatly that
England was importing his clocks.

America has contributed little toward
the development of new clock cases
until recently. However, the introduc-
tion of electricity for the motive power
in clocks effected a revolution in their
artistry, shape and design. American
design lead in the simplicity and
beauty of modern electric clocks.

The Connecticut clockmaking industry
was established by Seth Thomas, a
helper of Eli Terry, and has expanded
so greatly that single clocksmiths now
turn out several million clocks annu-
ally. Today the Connecticut clockmaker
marks time for the world.