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National Association of
WATCH & CLOCK
Collectors, Inc.



HAPPENINGS

NEWS FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION MAY 2009

NAWCC Unveils New Website

The NAWCC formally debuted its new website March 30 after months of careful planning and hard work by the National staff. A number of new features will be installed over the summer. Please visit the new site and check back often for updates.

www.nawcc.org

School Schedule: Summer 2009

The NAWCC School of Horology has begun its Summer Workshop series, as part of the Continuing Education Curriculum. Click [here](#) for the complete list of courses offered this year.

Historical Auction of Horological Books

On May 26 and 27, Parisian auctioneer and horology expert Hervé Chayette will auction off the private library of Milanese horological historian Giuseppe Brusa at the Hôtel Drouot in Paris. The collection numbers more than 500 books and catalogs, including original editions from the Renaissance and English translations of ancient Arab texts and astrological works.

The auctioneer Hervé Chayette has added over 1,000 books from other collections, making this one of the largest sales of horological books ever assembled.

It is expected that the

Dear NAWCC Member,

This issue highlights watches in the news related to historical figures and events. It seems that when something important happens, there is a timepiece nearby to confirm it.

Enjoy!

Long-Hidden Message Finally Revealed in Lincoln's Pocket Watch



Abraham Lincoln's Inscribed Pocket Watch

For generations it has been rumored that there was a secret message engraved by a watchmaker in 1861 inside the case of a gold pocket watch that belonged to Abraham Lincoln.

On Tuesday, March 10, at the request of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, NAWCC member George Thomas opened the back of the timepiece to formally investigate the claim that there was a hidden message on the underside of the watch movement.

The following inscription was found:

"Jonathan Dillon April 13- 1861 Fort Sumpter was attacked by the rebels on the above date. J Dillon," and the brass underside of the watch movement reads: *"April 13- 1861 Washington thank God we have a government Jonth Dillon."*

The back of the watch movement also bears two other inscriptions: *"LE Grofs Sept 1864 Wash DC,"* presumably engraved by another watchmaker, and what appears to be *"Jeff Davis."* Jefferson Davis was the president of the Confederacy and may have been engraved there as an expression of a later repairman's pro-Confederacy sentiments.

Sadly, the pocket watch is no longer functional. "It's frozen," Mr. Thomas said. "It hasn't been touched in a hundred years."

After the internal workings were photographed for posterity, the watch was carefully reassembled. It will be placed back on exhibit at the Smithsonian, now accompanied by a closeup photograph and a written transcript of the engraving.

Pocket Watch Recovered from Titanic Victim Goes on Public Display

auction will attract a global audience.

Time Traveling Winery Tour was a success!

The National Watch & Clock Museum hosted a very special tour experience for NAWCC members

April 23-26, in South Central Pennsylvania.

Members enjoyed wine-tasting and dinner at a local winery; a comprehensive tour of the National Watch & Clock Museum and School of Horology at the NAWCC National campus in Columbia, PA; and tours of the York Heritage

Agricultural Museum, the Hagley Museum and Library in the Brandywine valley, and Winterthur, the

175-room estate of Henry Francis du Pont in Delaware that features the colonial Dominy family clock making workshop exhibit and special exhibit Harbor & Home, the furniture, with clocks, of Southeastern Massachusetts.

Participants then visited another local winery and experienced more local culture and food of South Central Pennsylvania. National staff appreciated meeting and spending time with members in an informal setting. Everybody had a grand time. Plan to join us when we tour again next October!

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Pocket watch survived the wreck of the Titanic.

A pocket watch formerly owned by Titanic passenger, John Chapman, has been put on public display for the first time.

Chapman, 37, took passage on the doomed luxury liner with his young bride, Lizzie Chapman, 29. They had been heading to America to be near Mrs. Chapman's brother and planned to run a farm and start a family together.

When the Titanic struck an iceberg and began to sink, Mrs. Chapman actually entered one of the ship's few lifeboats. Upon learning that her husband would not be allowed to accompany her, she turned to her friend Emily Richards and said: "Goodbye, Mrs. Richards. If John can't go, I won't go either."

The couple drowned when the mighty ship sank into the icy water minutes later.

Mr. Chapman's pocket watch stopped at precisely 1:45 AM on April 15, 1912--the moment he entered the frigid water. The watch was later recovered along with Mr. Chapman's body.

Now the watch is being shown for the first time at a new Titanic exhibition at the National Maritime Museum in Falmouth, Cornwall.

Gandhi's Pocket Watch Sells At Auction



Mahatma Gandhi was never known as a man of many possessions. But everyone needs a watch, Gandhi included. Gandhi's Zenith alarm pocket watch went to auction on March 5 as part of a small collection of the Indian leader's personal belongings.

The recent auction inspired outrage in India, whose government declared the auction illegal.

Gandhi's personal belongings, including the watch, sold for \$1.8 million (additional buyer fees brought the total cost to \$2,096,000). The winning bid came from Indian tycoon Vijay Mallya, who announced plans to return the items to India. It was unclear whether he planned to restore the watch or leave it in its present condition for historical reasons.

Over 40 bidders registered at the auction--far more than the 6 registered bidders who took part in a similar auction last October, in which a watch once owned by Albert Einstein sold for almost \$600,000.

Horology in the Media



Our last issue examined the importance of horology in the hit television series "Heroes," in which one of the most important and powerful series characters, the archvillain "Sylar," begins his career as a watch repairman, the son of a skilled clockmaker.

In this issue we return to the horology-superhero connection by discussing the strange super-powered character "Doctor Manhattan," one of the stars of the recent blockbuster feature film [The Watchmen](#).

The fictional Doctor Manhattan (portrayed by Billy Crudup in the recent film) was born Jonathan Osterman in 1929. His father was a watchmaker, and Jon planned to follow in his footsteps. But after the U.S. drops the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Osterman instead pursues a career in nuclear physics.

Later, while on a date, Jon's girlfriend breaks her watchband and damages her wristwatch. Jon repairs the watch and plans to return it to his girlfriend, but he accidentally leaves it in his lab coat inside an experimental atomic test chamber. Trying to retrieve the watch, Jon is caught inside the test chamber and exposed to 'intrinsic field' radiation.

This radiation results in Osterman's transformation into the blue-skinned, nuclear-powered, supergenius crimefighter with the code name "Doctor Manhattan."

The now superpowered hero makes formidable use of his watchmaking skills and mechanical acumen throughout the graphic novel and in the film version of [The Watchmen](#)... except now working on a SUPER colossal scale.

Horology saves the day!

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