

## **Extreme Restoration**

### **The comprehensive guide for preservation and restoration of antique American clocks**

#### **An e-book by Tom E. Temple**

*Published 2005, by the author; 1 CD in container, containing the full text (681 pages, 2 700 illustrations, in Adobe PDF format, plus copy of the Adobe reader program. More information and electronic order form at <http://xrestore.com> ; suggested retail price \$49.95 plus shipping.*

Many of the existing books on horological collecting touch tangentially on how to restore clock movements or clock cases. But there are few titles that specifically and exclusively deal with clock restorations and virtually all of them are European (either in language other than English or dealing with the subject from a British perspective. Tom Temple's new "book" definitively fills a void. I am aware of only one other recent title (Craig Burgess, Clock Case Refinishing and Restoration, 2004) on the subject, and that is only a slim 60 pages, and can not really be compared to this comprehensive book.

Of course there are numerous excellent books around on woodworking in general, as well as on furniture repair and restoration, but they completely ignore not only movement restoration, but also such themes as the preservation and repair of dials, hands, labels and reverse painted glass tablets. On each of these special subjects (and their sub-specialties) there are excellent guides in the form of articles spread over decades of past issues of the NAWCC Bulletin. (And thanks to the comprehensive online index to BULLETIN Articles at <http://24.104.50.30/BulletinIndex/bulsrch.htm>, in connection with the Library in Columbia Pa. lending or selling past Bulletin issues they can even be located). But –to my knowledge- no other American-style-clocks specific text of this depth has ever been published on clock restoration techniques.

The final product very much looks and feels as if the author had initially set out to produce a conventional (i.e. printed on paper) book, and only toward the end of the process reached the conclusion that the cost would have been prohibitive for a 600+ page volume with thousand of color images, which would be of interest to only a few hundred enthusiasts. So it became an "e-book" published on a CD in Adobes pdf-format. The advantage is relatively low production costs for the publisher. The disadvantage is that few hobbyists will want to consult their computer screen in their dusty workshops, and will have to bear the printing and binding costs themselves if they also want a paper copy. That this was initially not expected to be an e-book is underscored by the fact that some of the navigational tools common within e-books are lacking. (E.g. from the table of content there are only links to the chapter headings, not to the headings of the sub-chapters, and there are no cross-reference links to other passages with related content). If you print out the whole thing you may find the document somewhat difficult to use, as there are no page numbers neither in the table of content, nor on any of the pages.

While the subtitle mentions both preservation and restoration (and the introductory part explains the difference between the two well) the heart of the author clearly beats for restoration, and the reader who is set to preserve (i.e. maintain the current status of the timepiece far into the future) will not find much useful information in the text. The author also deals with the controversy of "over-restoration" and rightfully concludes that this involves personal judgement calls, in the eyes of this reviewer if in doubt he over-restores. That may be partly because the actual projects he describes step-by-step involve what he calls "Extreme Restoration" (what I call "basket cases") where there is very little to preserve, but which he strives to resurrect to a "like new from the factory" status.

Another limitation the possible purchaser of this publication needs to be aware of is that it deals nearly exclusively with and applies to factory-made, wooden-cased clocks, produced in Connecticut in the middle and late 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is only limited information in the text applicable to e.g. craftsmen-made, pre-industrial clocks, metal cased clocks, alarm clocks, electrical clocks and many other more specialized timepieces.

Within these limitations however the text is very thorough, comprehensive and easy to follow. It is superbly illustrated with many detailed pictures explaining the procedures step-by-step. There are worksheets and checklists that will make such a complex project manageable. While it helps to have a general grounding

in woodworking or cabinetmaking skills, I believe that with this text in hand even a complete novice in the field, if he is careful and deliberate, and has some manual dexterity, can achieve impressive results. The text is uncommonly thorough and touches on all aspects of an "Extreme Restoration". Woodworking, case finishing (including stenciling, gesso and faux wood), reverse painted glass tablets, label preservation, case assembly, dials, hands, movements and setup are all covered. Even if 180 pages are devoted to "Movements" (making this the single biggest chapter) this reviewer considers that part the relatively speaking weakest part of the text. A novice will be well served with this book, as long as he has a standard, fairly common, run-of-the mill movement to deal with that has no unusual faults. But clearly restoring any kind of special mechanism, such as unusual escapements, special striking setups, unusual alarm configurations, repeating mechanisms, animated dials, calendar mechanisms etc. is clearly above and beyond the scope of this book, and will require studying the specialist literature.

The author's website (<http://xrestore.com>) not only provides a good summary of the content of this publication, but also provides several specialized message board type forums where readers can ask questions and discuss details of all subjects covered in the book.

Altogether "Extreme Restoration" by Tom Temple should well fill a niche in the horological literature, and could be considered a "must buy" for anyone attempting his or her first complete rebuild of a standard, wood-cased American factory made clock from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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Bookreview by Fortunat Mueller-Maerki, Sussex NJ

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