

Happy 150th Birthday!



Welcome to the
TOPSFIELD TOWN HALL CLOCK
on its 150th Birthday (Sesquicentennial)



~ Prepared by ~
Norm Isler & Gary Bergmann Keepers of the Clock
2023

A Brief History...

Topsfield's Model 3A Tower Clock was purchased for \$325 from the George M. Stevens Company of Boston and was installed during the construction of Town Hall (1873-1874):

Salem Gazette, September 2, 1874:

"Topsfield can boast of a town clock, in good running order, placed last week in the new Town Hall, which is nearly completed "

Funding for the clock was raised "by public entertainment provided by an amateur dramatic club composed of the young people of the town."



Stevens manufactured tower clocks for over 50 years. There are as many as 21 "Model 3" variations in existence, but only 7 or fewer known working "Model 3A" clocks, one of which sits proudly atop our Town Hall.

It is a single, all-mechanical pendulum controlled clock, gravity powered by a 300-pound weight that drops 16 feet over the course of a week. The gears of the clock are synchronized to simultaneously drive all 4 clock faces with an accuracy of ± 2 minutes per month.

Seasonal temperature extremes in the tower require occasional adjustments to accommodate change in the length of the pendulum, as well as the twice annual change for Daylight Saving Time.

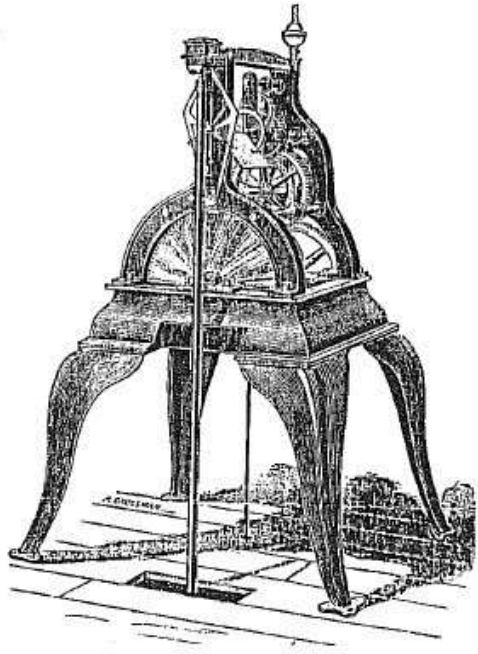


Keepers of the Clock

The current Keepers of the Town Hall Clock, Norm Isler and Gary Bergmann, are responsible for maintaining, inspecting, and the accurate timekeeping of the Town Hall Tower Clock.

For its first 128 years, the clock was hand-wound by highly dedicated volunteers who climbed 5 flights of stairs every week. Unfortunately, consistent winding was not always the case and the clock fell dormant on a number of occasions.

In 2002, Co-Keepers Bob Winship and Norm Isler installed an automated motorized



winding system to eliminate the need for weekly hand-winding. That system had been in successful operation until the renovation of Town Hall (2017-2019) stopped the clock, and the pandemic's social distancing requirements further delayed its reactivation until 2021.

In the fall of that year, after much needed cleaning and refurbishing, this 150-year old iconic town landmark is now fully functional performing its one job...keeping Topsfield on time!

Enjoy your visit!

