

The Clock Key's Story

I am an old clock key. If you are willing to read these lines I'd like to tell you my story. I'm sort of a handsome shape even if I do say so myself. Once I was shiny brass but now I'm tarnished and blackened. You say how did I get to be so black. For many days, months and years I hung in a handy place on this old blacksmith shop wall. The sulfur from the coal smoke of the forge fire has destroyed my once handsome shine. No one had noticed me hanging there on that nail beside the small now empty clock shelf for a long time. I missed my companion, the clock, which had been taken from its place long ago by I do not remember just who. It was a sad day for me that I too was not remembered. Maybe I was fortunate through, because I do not believe the clock that I wound each morning has survived the passing of the years. It is remarkable that I'm still here to tell you about my job keeping that clock ticking.



Most of you young folks do not even remember clocks that had to be wound with keys like me. Batteries and something called electricity have made me just a curious old thing to most of you. I will make an attempt to guide you back to a day and age when I was yet an everyday necessity. My place was on the east inside wall of the shop of Canajoharie farrier and blacksmith John Hambrecht. My

owner from way back then came from Germany in the dawning years of the 20th Century. Clock keys like me were pretty important back then. Somehow I can still feel John's strong hands on me as he wound his clock each day. I knew his hands gained that strength from years shoeing horses and forging iron. I held a place of honor in that time so long ago. The reason I say I had a place of honor is I was close to a small mirror that John used to be sure the black was washed from his face when he left each night to return to his mill street home. In a cabinet nearby is one of John's cherished possessions. That small shears was given to him by his mother when he sailed for his new home in America. She told him that he could use them when he sewed on a button and she was not there to do it for him anymore.

John remembered that his mother had given the shears to him when he proposed to make the trip to a new land, America. This old brass clock key can remember when the old blacksmith retired, shut the shop's door for the last time and left me behind. In 1963 John passed away and the old key was long forgotten. However old keys like many outmoded things have a way of sometimes resurfacing. If you will bear with me I'll tell you of my trip on toward the present. Many of the old tools were, years ago, given to the Fort Klock blacksmith shop so young folks can see them used again. I'm sure their old owners would like that. John's sign was given to his long time friend Skip by Mr Burgess the last shop owner. Until very recently this old key stayed where it had been for so long. Then one day recently the shop owner allowed Skip and Emanuel, his young Amish wagon maker friend to see if there was anything yet in the shop they would like to purchase. Emanuel still knowing the use of clock keys notices me hanging there on the blackened wall.

Skip took me down and put me in his pocket. How pleased I was that someone wanted me again. I now have a new tag tied to me to tell where I was found. Where will I be in the future? No one knows but I'm happy that I was found after so many years and am prized again by someone.

Skip Barshied helped the old key write its story

Stone Arabia

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