

**A Celebration of Life
for
Marge and Howard Banta**



I attended the celebration of life for Marge and Howard Banta hosted by Ron and Kathy Jensen (daughter and son-in-law) at their former home in Northridge, CA. on September 25, 2003.

Friends came together to talk about the adventures, travels and finds they discovered with the Banta's over the many years. Friends told of buying, selling and collecting clocks and were supportive of the family in their time of need having lost both parents in less than a month. All attending agreed that the Banta's both would be greatly missed.

The NAWCC will have a difficult time filling Howard's shoes. . He was a one-of-a-kind man. His wit and wisdom and knowledge of alarm clocks, which were his passion, were gained through decades of personal experience and research. He enjoyed nothing more than to share his enthusiasm for alarm clocks with anyone who would listen.

I ask you now to support "The Alarm Clock Chapter" in his memory. Your contribution of newsletter articles and in-

Instructions to Authors

All are encouraged to submit articles for publication. Please include your name, address and phone number with the article. Although certainly not a complete list, suggestions for topics are

- . Specific alarm clocks or manufacturers
- . Unique designs
- . Special methods of cleaning
- . Descriptions of interesting repairs.

Photos along with the text are always appreciated. Please email to the editor at

saraandmary@sbcglobal.net

Now is the only time there is. Make your now wow, your minutes miracles, and your days pay. Your life will have been magnificently lived and invested, and when you die you will have made a difference.

— Mark Victor Hansen

information on alarm clocks, paying dues when due and volunteering to accept an office in the chapter is imperative to our survival.

— Mike Wilson

Next Issues...

Originally we had planned to provide the first of two reprints of Doug Stevenson's articles "Wakers and Makers" and "Wakers and Shakers". However Vince Angell, the author of this issues article on Darche clocks, has provided the text of an article on the Darche Electric Clock company by Judith Z. Rubin. For consistency, the Rubin article is supplied in the issue and we will provide the first article of Professor Stevenson's in the next issue.

From the Editor

My apologies for the lack of image clarity in this issue. I'm still struggling with PageMaker, and would be most appreciative of any tips on using the software.

— Mary Maier

Alarm Clock Chapter : Annual Dues \$15.00
Quarterly Newsletter

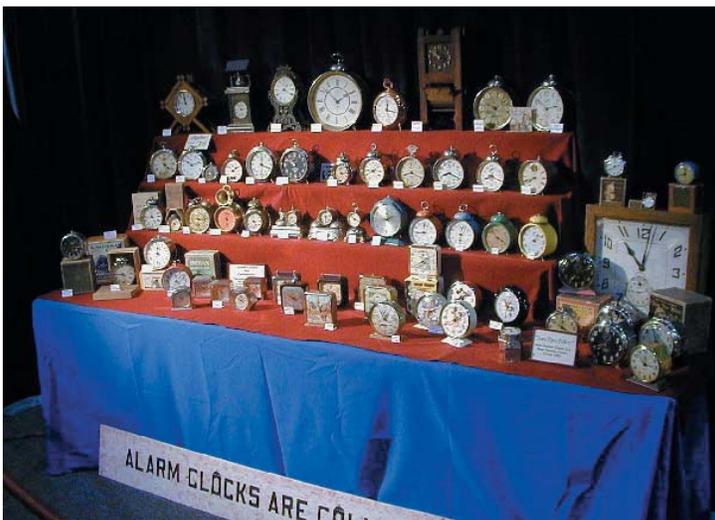
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The 2003 Silver Dollar Regional Meeting
by Vince Angell

Chapter 71, in conjunction with the Sierra Nevada Chapter 65, held the 2003 Silver Dollar Regional in Reno Nevada on June 15th and 16th. Approximately 500 people attended the successful Regional. There were over 200 tables with all sorts and sizes of horological treasures.

I was pleased to contribute some of my own collection to a special display entitled "Alarm Clocks are Collectable". The photos on this page are from that display.

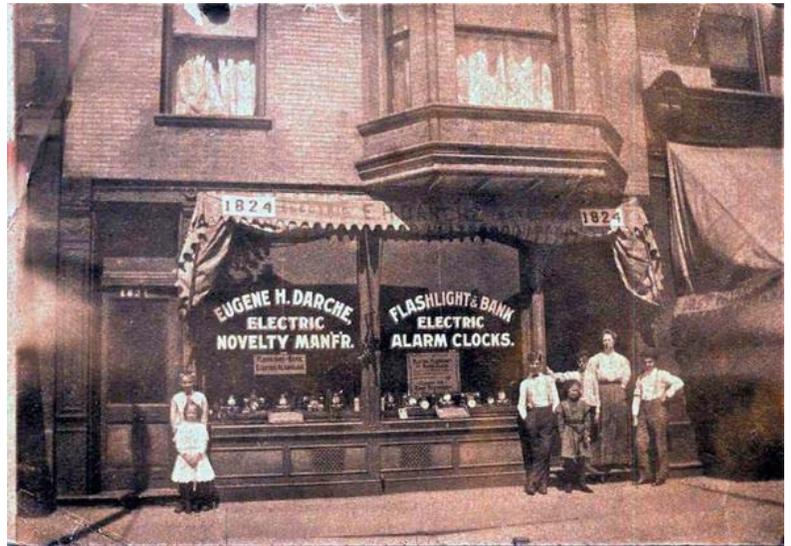


**The Darche Electric Clock Company
by Vince Angell**

The Darche Electric Clock produced some of the most interesting novelty clocks during the late 1800's and early 1900's. I'm pleased to provide an article taken from the June 1993 issue of the NAWCC Bulletin. This will appear, with some reformatting, at the end of this issue.

In what follows, I will provide several examples of clocks made by Darche, including "Grand Daddy", "Get Up", and "Flashlight", three of my favorites. I hope you enjoy this subject as much as I enjoy it.

The first of these images shows the Darche storefront at 1824 W. Grand Avenue in Chicago, Illinois at about the



Left : Hyman McTarish and Ethel Darche.
Right : Earl Darche, Carmine Darche, Sophia Darche, Eugene Darche

The Darche Electric Alarm shown below is what I would refer to as the "Grand Daddy" of all the Darches. This is the earliest of all the Darches, but probably not the rarest. It was patented on July 5, 1892 (patent No. 478,155). It stands about 20" tall and is made of walnut. The alarm is set on the back of the movement with a dry cell battery powering the alarm bell (see bottom right). A close-up of the Darche label with operating instructions is shown bottom center. At right is an image of the clock's face.



Con't : The Darche Electric Clock Company

The next Darche example (seen at right) is the "Get-up" Electric Alarm Clock ca. 1907. I was able to find a patent on the stand design but not the complete clock. Patent August 8, 1904 - No. 87091 is the patent used in the stand production. This model has a nickel plated stand and clock with a paper dial.



And last but not least, what is arguably the rarest of all the Darches. It is the Flashlight Electric Alarm Clock ca. 1907 (remaining images at right and below). The case and Stand are nickel plated and the dial is paper.



The alarm is powered by 2 dry cell Batteries. When the bulb's button on the cord is pressed, the light lets you see the dial and what time it is. This clock had to be placed at least 6 or 10 feet from the bed so that you would not turn off the alarm and fall back asleep. The extremely unusual part of this clock are the original Darche Batteries. The batteries are not functional but are extremely important to the originality of the clock.



Con't : The Darche Electric Clock Company

The Darche battery received a Gold Medal at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904. This is actually printed on the battery's label as is shown in the two figures on this page. Directions for how to operate the Early Alarm are also printed on the label, and retyped below for ease of reading.



Get Up Electric Alarm Clock

EARLY RISER'S FRIEND
THE ONLY PERFECT "ALARM" ON THE MARKET

Directions

Place clock 6 to 10 feet from bed, set alarm at the time desired, with small indicator on back of clock, give alarm LEVER a full turn downward then upward as far back as practical. When alarm is set off, rise and place "PORCELAIN THIMBLE" between LEVER and the battery contact to prevent from ringing. The BATTERY requires no care only care should be taken not to expose it to extreme HEAT OR SUN.

**MANUFACTURED BY
DARCHE ELECTRIC CLOCK COMPANY**

**830 SOUTH HALSTED STREET
CHICAGO, ILL.**

**306 CENTRAL AVENUE
JERSEY CITY, N.J.**



**The Darches and Me
by Judith Z. Rubin**

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“To begin, I must admit I know very little about electricity except that when you plug an appliance into a wall socket it usually works and, of course, you never use a knife to get toast out of a toaster. But, electricity isn’t what this is all about. Rather, I wanted to find out everything there is to know about my Darche to give it the dignity I knew it deserved and take it out of the “novelty clock” category.

Where to start? I knew the Darche Electric Clock Co. was based in Chicago so I decided to let my fingers do the searching in the telephone book perhaps some descendant of the Darche family was still around. Indeed, four families in the Chicagoland area named Darche were listed. Three of the four were disappointments, i.e., no answer, disconnected, and no way could they be related to a clockmaster. The fourth was a possibility some grandfather was an electrician and he liked to putter around; they would check around and let me know. No luck here either. They never called back.

The NAWCC Research Library was more fruitful. They came up with the patent application - including sketches and details - dated June 1, 1891. A patent was received in 1892 for the purpose of making an “electric alarm clock, i.e., a dry cell battery in combination with a spring so that the contact wheel carrying the insulated terminal and the shaft carrying the pin with the gearing adapted would rotate the contact wheel synchronously with the hour hand.” Here we see that electricity, via the dry cell battery, has nothing to do with the running of the clock which was spring driven, but instead controlled the alarm. Most of the clock movements were Waterburys, probably the “MUSTGETUP” alarm clock movement.

But what of the Darche Clock Company? Logic took me to the Chicago Historical Society, the Newbury Library (a fine research library in Chicago) and the Chicago Public Library. Nothing was on file about this company at any of these institutions. It was as if the company was the figment of someone’s imagination. However, I did find the “Lakeside Directory of Chicago” at the Chicago Historical Society. This Directory lists companies, their business addresses, their officers, their professions and where they lived. Not much to go on but it did give me enough data to develop the following. George C. Darche, whose name we are most familiar with on the clocks in question, had several relatives (brothers I like to think) in the business. In 1882 Theodore Darche, a carpenter, and Eugene Darche, a boxmaker, were the only persons listed in the company records. George, a plater, first came upon the scene in 1883. That same year Theodore changed hats from carpenter to contractor. By 1884 Joseph Darche, a millwright, joined the group and Theodore once again changed to CEO of the T. Darche & Co. on South State Street in Chicago. George, in 1885 through 1888, opened up at 31 Clark Street and later at 35 Clark Street, a business of electrical supplies. Good old Theodore in 1887 was now listed as a locksmith and carpenter. Edward, another Darche, appeared in 1888 as an electrician at 416 State Street. The only other Darche to appear was Ephraim, a teamster.

Here we have the nucleus of a good electric clock. A millwright to create the fancy wood designs, a carpenter to construct the case, an electrician to do the wiring, a locksmith to tidy up the case and keep the door shut, a contractor to make sure everyone did what they were supposed to do and a teamster to settle disputes in case they didn’t.

The Darche Electric Co. shows up in 1889 at 37 Clark St., and in 1891 George C. is listed as President and Edward T. is Secretary. By 1895 George is listed as a jeweler at 648 W. 12th Street, and, at last, in 1896 the Darche Clock Co. at the 648 W. 12th address is born. From 1897 through 1902 the Darche Clock Co. shows George C. as President of the company at locations at 618 W. 12th and then at 830 S. Halsted.

I suspect that all the moving around - further and further from the center of the city had to do with the building boom after the great Chicago fire of 1871. The central city was largely destroyed and moving to newer facilities as they were built seems a fairly logical thing to do.

Con't : The Darches and Me

The first mention of the Darche Electric Clock Company was in 1903 at the 803 S. Halsted address and in 1904 we see someone other than George as president of the company. Don Evans was president, taking over when George died in 1904. His presidency didn't last long, for in 1905 Frank Jansen became president and remained so through 1909.

Then, a wonderful thing happened. In 1909 the company underwent yet another name change, this time to Darche Manufacturing Co. with Augusta Y. Darche as President. Yes, a woman! This must have been revolutionary for that time. As a matter of fact, Augusta held the position until 1928 when E. J. Heilman became president.

Going back to the early part of 1904 - perhaps while George was sick and dying - we find that Augusta applied for a patent for a STAND FOR AN ELECTRIC ALARM CLOCK which she received in August of that year no helpless widow she! In June of 1904 Augusta applied for another patent for an Electric Alarm Clock which was granted in March of 1906. She had invented: "an alarm i.e. the combination of a clock alarm mechanism and an arm adapted to be moved thereby, of an electric signal, a circuit for said signal in the path of movement of said arm and an insulating sleeve moveably mounted on said stationary electrode and adapted to be positioned between said arm and stationary electrode for preventing contact there between and thus maintaining the circuit open."

In 1909 Frank Jansen, while he was still president of the Darche Manufacturing Co., registered the trademark "SEARCH-LIGHT" and the F. W. Jansen name appeared on the "Darche" clock. During this time we also find the "Medical Surgical" clock. Darche alarm clock whose switches at the far left front are marked "medical set," and those at the center are marked "surgical set." Confusing? Yes! Could it have been used for electrical treatments or shock therapy?

We also find the "Dittco" clock made in the U.S.A. by B.A. Dittman Clock Co., New York, which looks the same as the "Timelite" made by F.W. Jansen Clock Co., of Chicago, which, in turn, is probably the same as the "Searchlight" patent given to Darche Electric Clock Co., F. W. Jansen, President, in 1909.

The Jansen name seems to have only been around during 1908 and 1909 at which time Augusta must have become fed up with Mr. Jansen and took over as president of the company.

E. J. Heilman followed Augusta as president in 1928, but 1929 appears to have been the end of the Darche Manufacturing Co. Apparently, the Great Depression of 1929 did not spare this most interesting company and its horological wonders. This history of George and Augusta and all the other Darches is a melding of listed data and surmises and extrapolates. Novelty clock or not, the DANCHE clock and its holders seem to have come out of the "fire in 1871" and succumbed to the "depression of 1929" and is a worthy addition to any collection of timepieces."