

Restoration of Vintage Alarm Clocks--Forward

Back 80-100 years ago when mechanical alarm clocks were the only available option, there were ample replacement parts stocked by the service centers. In fact, Westclox service centers were probably the best stocked houses for this type of work. Over the decades we have bought some original replacement parts as we could find them, and continue our search for them. Inevitably, limited supplies of these parts will run out. As this happens, the only choice we have is to make new parts or find ways to repair the originals, which we do. We've even purchased mainspring tempered strip steel as well as a stock of custom-made mainsprings (very expensive to do) because many replacement springs are obsolete or very poorly made in China. This reflects our commitment to deliver the very highest quality restoration to our customers.

In their day, Westclox movements were known for their reliability. They simply didn't wear out like many other alarm clocks of the era did. The idea of replacement parts worked extremely well in this context. However, today we come face to face with the inevitable, cumulative long term wear of these clocks. The original makers never intended them to be in use 60+ years, and so the cumulative wear we see is quite substantial. Bearings (holes), pivots and other friction points are showing substantial wear and this wear must be addressed in the restoration—very carefully.

If someone explains that an alarm clock “only needs cleaning,” beware! These clocks are often worn out substantially. The techniques we have developed to address this wear, during our 40 years of doing this work, are quite unique to alarm clocks. Techniques used to restore early American kitchen or mantle clocks simply don't apply and, in fact, never did.

Because these clocks are small, and were once inexpensive, many suppose that they are simple to repair. They are not. In fact, most clock repair services will not touch vintage alarms because they realize the problems they will face. They lack the training and experience to do a good job, and would botch them if they made any honest attempt at it. Under those circumstances, the best thing they can do for you is to turn the work away. Indeed, these clocks are very challenging to repair.

There is very little common knowledge about what we do, what these clocks need, and what it takes to restore them *properly*. For this reason, we offer a Library full of White Papers and Restoration Articles to help folks understand what is involved. We encourage you to take the time to explore them before contacting us about your vintage alarm clock restoration project.

For these reasons if you are searching the internet to find bargain prices on a vintage alarm clock repair, please consider this. We do not go out of our way to price high. In fact, we firmly stand by our commitment to provide the best price for what we do, including our Two Year Warranty of Restoration. We can firmly and confidently say you will not find a better alarm clock restoration service anywhere in the world.

Folks who wish to have their alarm clocks restored often inquire about price. If you wish to have your vintage alarm clock movement restored, you can anticipate a price range of \$275 to \$325 (the higher end is for 8 day vintage alarms) and it could be slightly more depending on what is wrong with it, but might be slightly less, too. If you require substantial case restoration and replating, then it is best to have us quote it, since so much depends on the condition of the individual clock.

Ken's Clock Clinic