

THE APOSTOLIC CLOCK

History

The Apostolic Clock was built by John Fiester over a period of 11 years. Beginning in 1878 he travelled with the clock around PA and charged 10¢ admission.

Though the circumstances are unclear, the clock was acquired by George Danner of Manheim, PA and placed in his museum. Milton Hershey purchased Danner's collection in 1935 and added the clock to his own history museum.

Highlights



The clock tells much more than the time of day - dials on the face count seconds, phases of the moon, months, signs of the zodiac, date and day of the week. Every fifteen minutes Father Time strikes a bell and the center life cycle figure changes. At quarter of each hour, several mechanical figures, including Christ and his twelve apostles, appear to tell the story of the betrayal of Christ.

Preservation

Part of The Hershey Story's mission is to safeguard items entrusted to its care, including the nationally significant Apostolic Clock. The museum strives to balance the preservation needs of each artifact with public interest.

John Fiester was not trained as a clockmaker. He modified components of three separate clock movements in order to assemble the procession, life cycle and time mechanisms. The movements were not designed to run in the manner in which Fiester configured them, and this causes undue wear on the components.

Though the clock was completely cleaned and restored in 1995, continual display and operation since 1938 have placed much stress on the 134-year-old artifact. The museum operates the Apostolic Clock periodically in an effort to preserve it for future generations. In 2011, reoccurring problems with several functions of the clock necessitated moving the clock off-site so the movements and internal mechanisms could be thoroughly cleaned. Upon close examination, it was decided to replace minor components that showed wear and inhibited the clock's operation. Replacing these components does not adversely affect the historic integrity of the clock.

The music box has also been restored and is preserved in the museum's collection. The songs have been recorded to preserve the music box. Should the powerful spring inside it break, it would cause massive damage to the music box. Therefore the museum no longer plays it.

