

LANCASTER FARMING ANTIQUES CENTER

ANTIQUE CLOCK DONATED TO FORT BEDFORD MUSEUM

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BEDFORD, Pa. — The Fort Bedford Museum recently became the owner of an antique clock donated by Kathleen and the late Mabel Holderbaum of New Paris.

Owned originally by the John Stuckey family, the stately case clock was made in the borough of Bedford about 1830 by a master craftsman, Jacob Diehl.

"It was made in Bedford and it needs to stay in Bedford," said Kathleen at a special reception in honor of her generous donation.

The grandfather's clock is constructed from cherry wood and has a handpainted iron celestial face.

Jacob Diehl was a clockmaker from 1776 until 1858. He was an apprentice under Daniel Rose. He married Molly Willaurer in Reading in July 1804. The couple came to Bedford in 1808 and in 1809, Diehl purchased lot 16 in Bedford from John and Nancy Williams for 235 pounds. The building where the Diehls resided and had their business still stands on Juliana Street.

Diehl advertised in the local newspaper for an apprentice to help with the clock and watch-making business. The ad requested a lad of about 14 or 15 years of age with reputable connections and Diehl assured the apprentice that he would receive good treatment.

Diehl considered his work to be good in every way. He warranted his work and claimed to be always on the spot to rectify any mistakes or accidents that might occur. However, Diehl did want it known that he was determined not to put



Master craftsman Jacob Diehl made this grandfather's clock of cherry wood with a handpainted iron celestial face circa 1830 in Bedford, Pa.

himself to any trouble in repairing clocks purchased from storekeepers who wished to injure or oppose him in his trade.

That reference was to John Schell, Jr., who began selling Philadelphia clocks.

Schell quickly responded by saying that he would himself repair the clocks he sold. On the 23rd of March, 1814, Diehl advertised in the Bedford Gazette, offering a reward for the return of his runaway

apprentice, Daniel Cox.

The new Fort Bedford Museum clock is one of seven in existence. One is located nearby at Old Bedford Village and has imported English works. It is not known where the rest of them might reside.

"I am just happy that this one will stay in Bedford," said Kathleen Holderbaum.

Tax records show that clockmaker Diehl was worth about \$590 in 1841.



Kathleen Holderbaum donated this magnificent clock to the Fort Bedford Museum. Shown with her is Houston Godwin, curator of the museum.

Christmas Top Spins for 140th Year



Photos by Robert Forman

Spinning the top has been a Christmas tradition since 1868.



The antique brass top.

DEER PARK, Wash. — As people all over the country consider the implications of scaling back their holiday shopping this year, they might be interested to learn about a little boy, born during the Civil War, whose love for one simple present has lasted more than a century and is still being celebrated today.

In Deer Park, Wash. this Christmas, a six-generation family tradition will mark its 140th anniversary. The small brass top David Linsley received as his only present when he was six years old has been spun on Christmas Eves since 1868.

The tradition began in Red Wing, Minn. where Dolph Linsley bought the spinning top for his young son.

It was David's only present that year. He treasured the new toy so much that he began a personal tradition of spinning it every year on Christmas Eve. This year in Deer Park, Wash., the Forman family — descendants of David Linsley — will celebrate the 140th anniversary of the Christmas top.

When David died in 1937, his son, James Linsley, continued his father's annual holiday ritual. The top went to James' daughter, Ruth Linsley Forman, in 1974. Since Ruth passed in 2004, her husband of 60 years, Robert Forman, continues spinning the top on Christmas Eve at family gatherings with children and grandchildren.

The top is tarnished and dented with age now, but still reflects the

fine craftsmanship of an older generation. The spinning Christmas top is featured in "One Present," posted on YouTube.

There have been only two years when the top did not spin on Christmas Eve. David's family was completing their move to Litchfield, Minn. on Christmas Eve in 1904. David and his hired man unloaded three teams of horses and a pair of mules in the winter darkness. Driving their stock through Litchfield's main street, the mules woke the village with their braying, but the top was still in transit, packed deep in one of the wagons. The other time was in 1959, when James and Martha traveled to Rockford, Ill. for a holiday visit with the Formans and forgot to pack the top.



Photo courtesy The Oshkosh Daily Northwestern.

Grandfather James Linsley, Minneapolis, holds the family top which since 1868 has been a part of family Christmas Eve parties. Shown beneath their Christmas tree (here on Christmas 1964) are Mrs. Robert Forman and son, Mark, who will one day be keeper of the family heirloom and its tradition.

