

tests the hypotheses, after the original author has placed his neck upon the chopping block, then brings down the axe with impunity, and sometimes righteousness, each time he can show the original author in error. No wish for righteousness motivates this article. On the contrary, the authors of the works challenged here should be saluted, for though their phrasing was sometimes clumsy or their grasp of details sometimes loose, their service was far more important than their shortcoming: against heavy odds, they tackled the monumental job of documenting the typewriter, and they left us with a more-often-than-not correct record of information that, save for their efforts, would have been lost. Because this article's purpose is to brighten some shadowed or miscolored recountings of history, it almost necessarily adopts a tone that seems smug with regard to the efforts of earlier writers. This is an unfortunate necessity and an unintended one, for full recognition is given that, were it not for the stupendous labors of earlier writers, the present writer could not enjoy the luxury of discussing historical details.

It is easy to see why the authors cited here would have gotten some details wrong; for although there were earlier compilations of the history of the typewriter, the earliest one quoted in this article had to review a half-century. In so doing, it catalogs 297 different makes of typewriter, and, often in more than passing detail, it describes numerous models produced by many. The sheer volume of the effort makes it clear why the present writer can find matter to correct, and the corrections are made not as indictments, but as footnotes or bibliographical addenda to the earlier, far more ambitious efforts. Even when the Condensed History contradicts itself, the error is pointed out and the correction offered not to subject that work to ridicule, but simply to caution the navigator through history, as did old nautical charts, "sailor beware here."

Thus the Condensed History contradicts itself by first describing the 1899 American typewriter as "the first of typebar machines to sell at \$50 retail," then goes on to describe the Hartford typewriter of five years earlier as a "machine with features commending it to a place in the \$100 class but upon which a price of \$50 was placed." Likewise, in describing the Standard Folding Typewriter, the

first "modern" frontstrike portable and the direct ancestor of the Corona, the Condensed History tells us that "Model 1, the first typewriter with an aluminum frame, was placed on the market in 1906," then later acknowledges that the Ford typewriter was available with an aluminum frame about a decade earlier.

Amongst the assorted authorities on the subject of typewriter history one can find as many contradictions as one can find hairs on this writer's very hairy head, and how many of them shall we split? Though some are glaring, others are matters of the arcane that, though it may be useful to somebody, somewhere, to have set straight, would amount to nitpicking here. Let the serious students track down the more minor errors printed elsewhere — and perhaps printed here — while we conclude with our final debatable contentions. They have to do with the typewriter's inventor, its creation of the liberated woman, and its prognosis as a collectable.

Note: The author would be happy to answer readers' questions about old typewriters. You can write him care of THE ANTIQUE TRADER WEEKLY. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a personal reply.

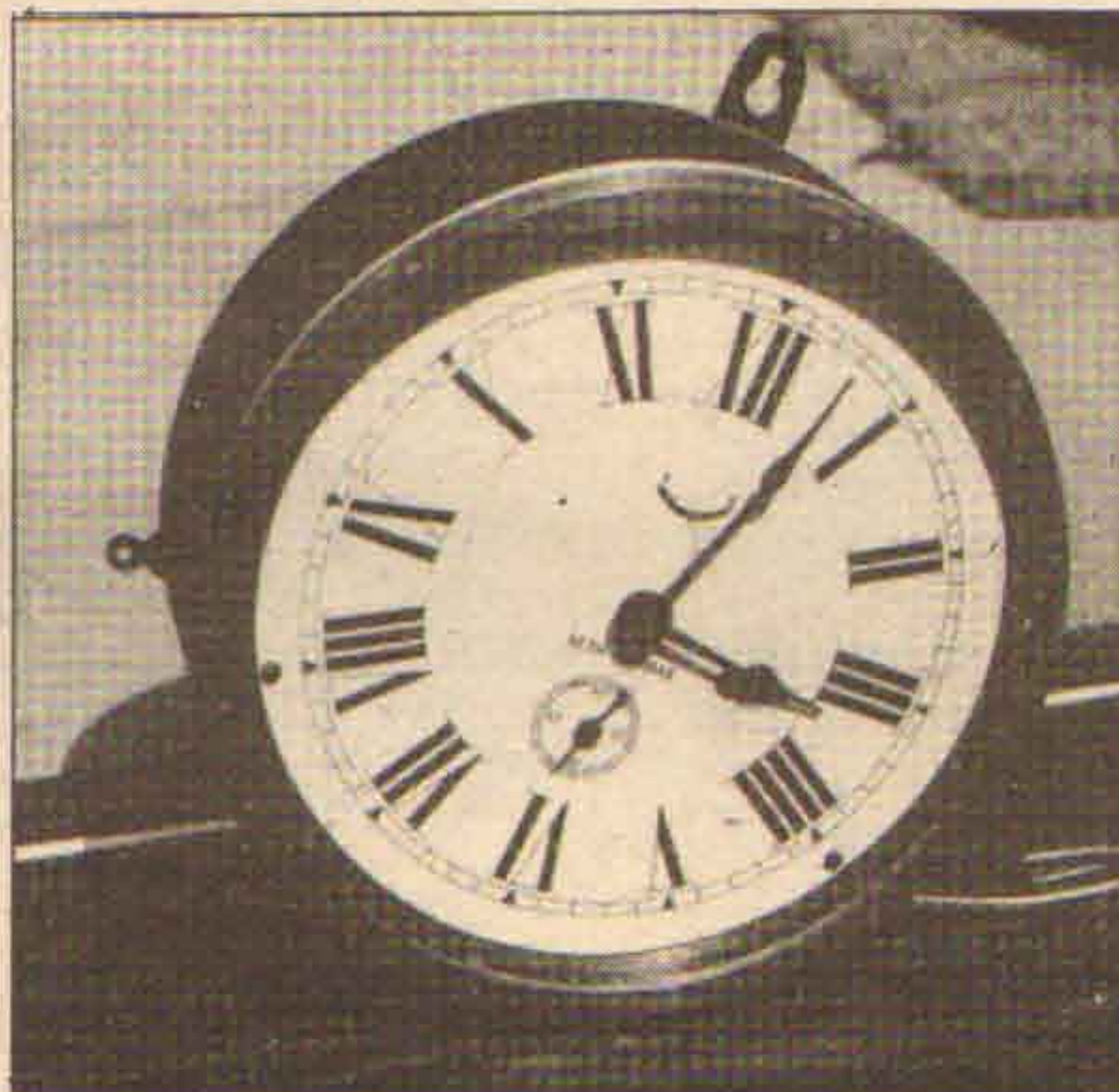
A Seth Thomas Locomotive Clock

by Harry B. Harris

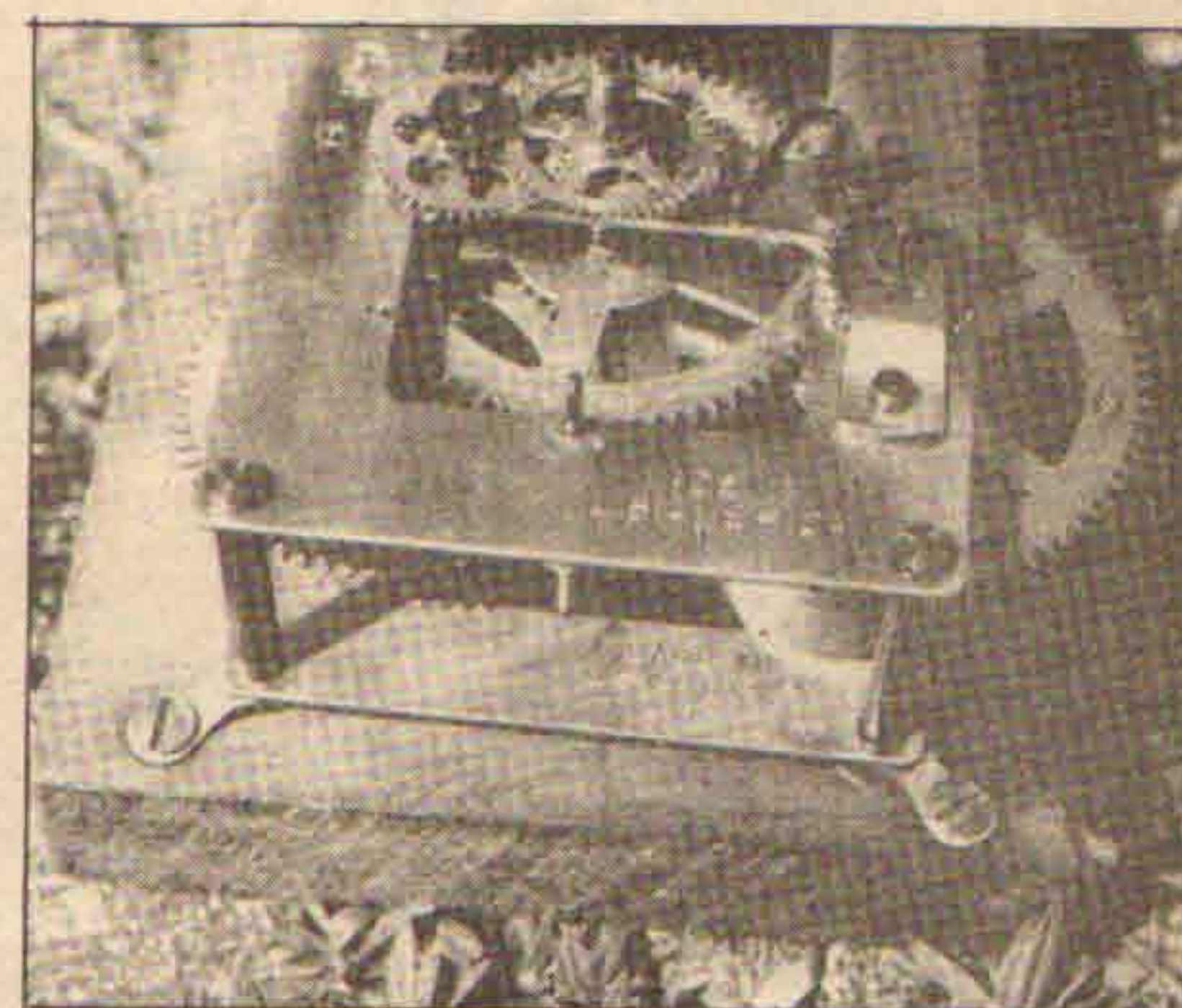
These have been doubts expressed by readers concerning an earlier Trader article about a steam locomotive clock. It was said by some that the moving, jerking and vibration of a steam locomotive would make a clock stop and damage it beyond use. However, The Howard Clock Company made extra fine clocks for steam locomotives as did Seth Thomas and other makers. Some makers furnished movements to processors who cased those movements and put their names on them. John J. McGrane, a manufacturing jeweler and jobber at 187 Broadway, New York, sold a locomotive clock with his name as maker. I don't know if he made it or not, but I doubt it.

The pictures here show an extra fine locomotive clock which was made by The Seth Thomas Clock Company. This clock came out of a big railroadiana collection. As shown, it never had a crystal or bezel. The dial has been professionally repainted. This clock was mounted in a box which had a glass door which acted as a crystal. The hanging piece and two steady pieces are brass. The case is heavy metal with a thinner metal back. The case material appears to be iron. There are two heavy brass rings, one mounted above the other, which at first glance look like a bezel. The lower brass ring is securely bolted to the case. The movement is mounted to a piece of soft wood 4 7/8" x 5 13/16" x 15/16" thick. Four brass wood screws secure the wood to the case through the case back. Everything is original. The movement is 3 1/8" x 4" x 1 3/8" thick. The plates vary in thickness from .061" to .063"; they were made of rolled brass. The ballnets are steel, balance wheel control. The Seth Thomas trademark leaves no doubt as to the maker. "Made in U.S. America" is on both plates. Fastened to the great wheel on opposite sides are heavy safety pieces. I call them that for want of a better name. They protect the movement from damage by a broken mainspring. They also act as a barrel containing the spring as it unwinds. I have never seen this arrangement on any other clock. This is a very fine clock with a good rate. It runs about two and a half days when wound. If wound all the way up, it would go much longer.

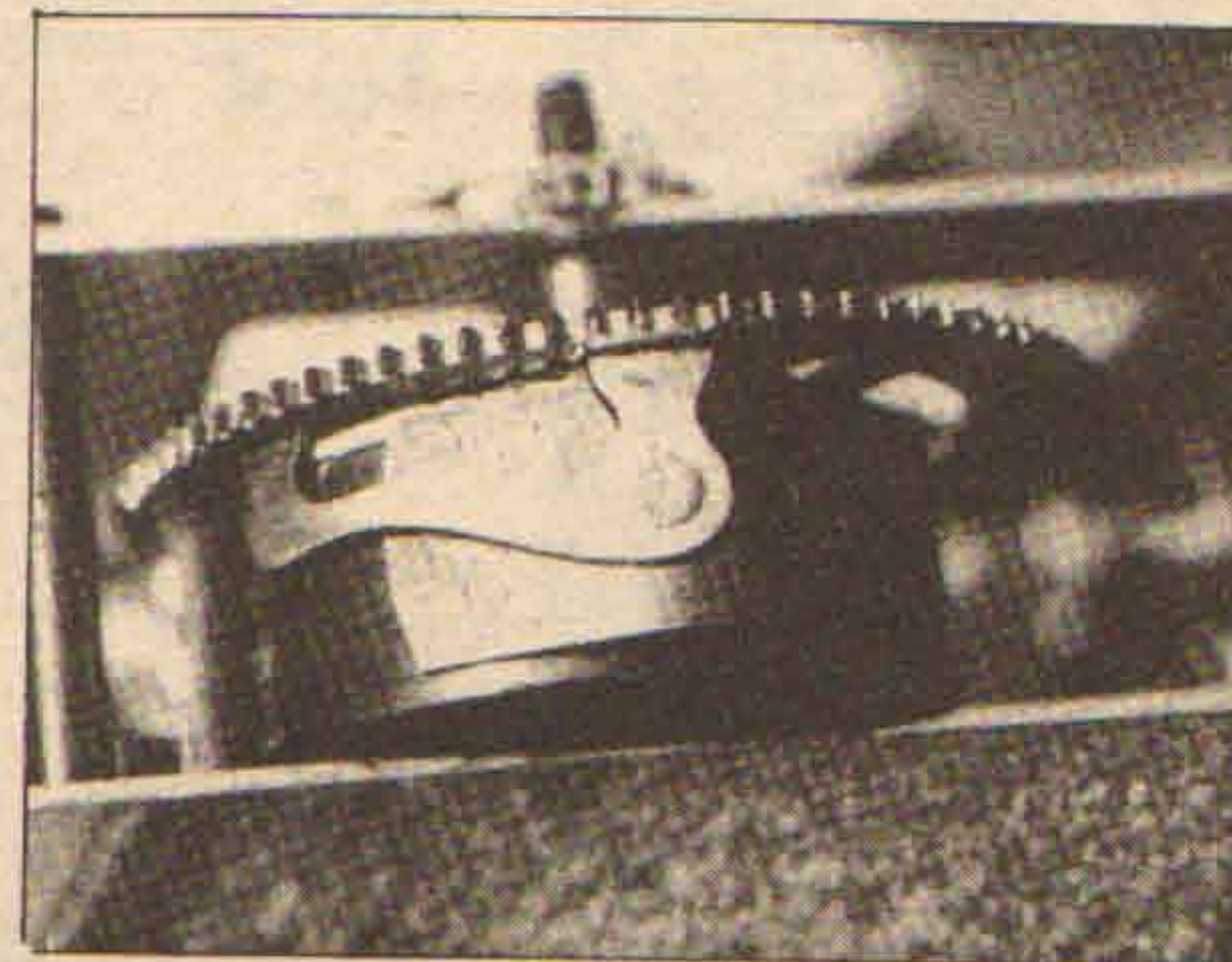
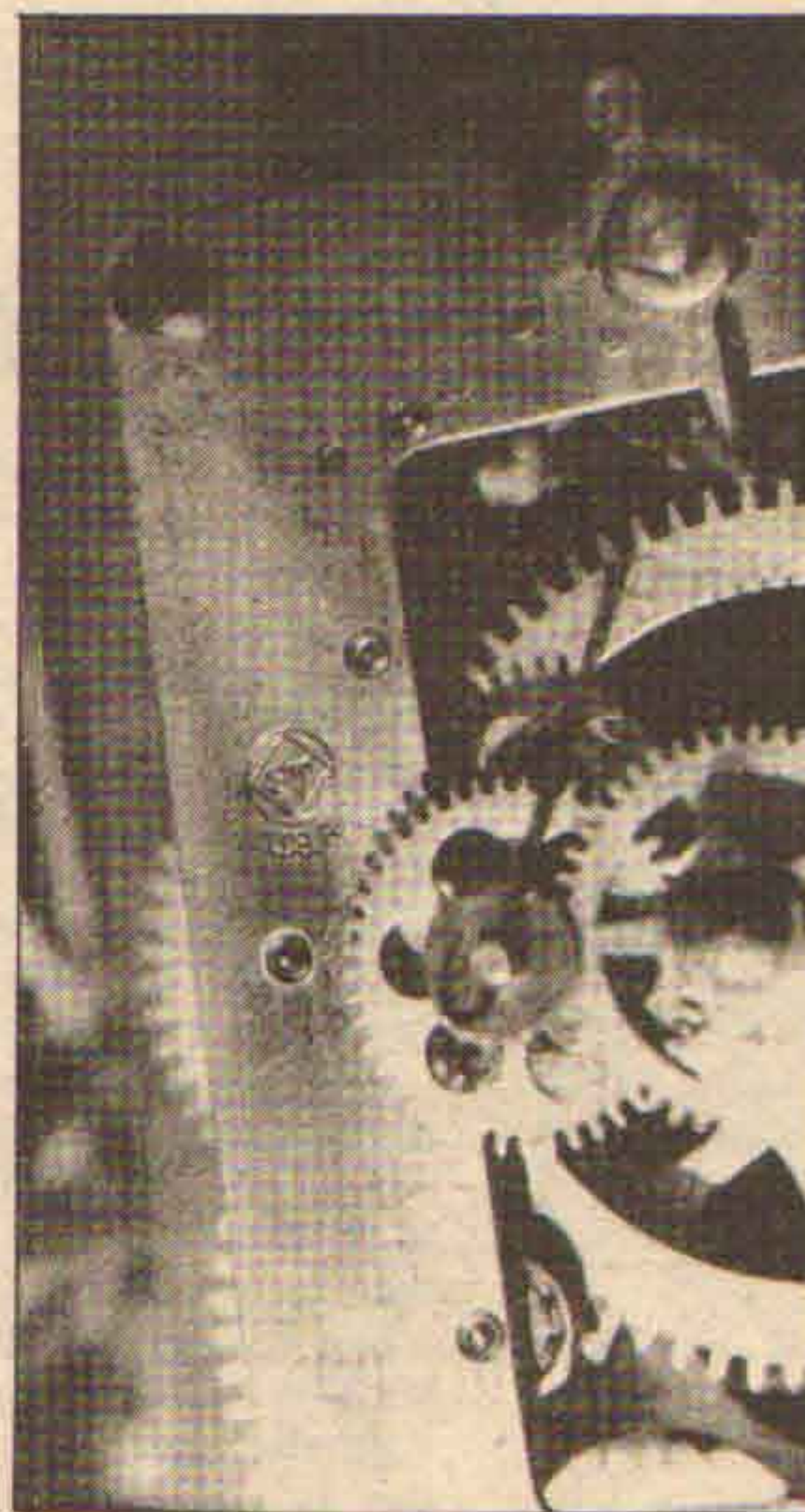
When was it made? I date it between 1875 and 1885. We know that the time service was established c. 1890 and around that time engineers, firemen and trainmen had to carry approved railroad grade watches so locomotive clocks were no longer needed. Today, these scarce clocks are sought by railroadiana collectors and clock collectors.



Dial of the Thomas locomotive clock.



Movement of the Seth Thomas locomotive clock on original wood mounting.



View showing the unusual safety piece on the great wheel of the locomotive clock works.



Seth Thomas mark found on the top plate of the clock works.