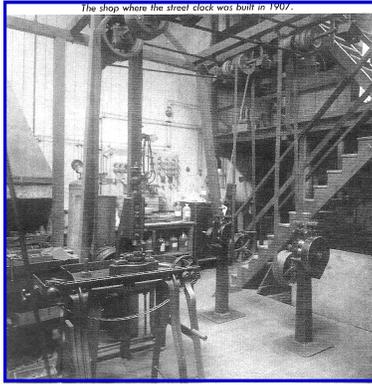


History of the Jessop's Street-Clock by Verlyn Kuhlmann

[Comments in "Braces: {}" are the author's].

Joseph Jessop (1851-1932), a watchmaker residing in Lytham England, moved to San Diego with his family and his watch-making tools in 1890.

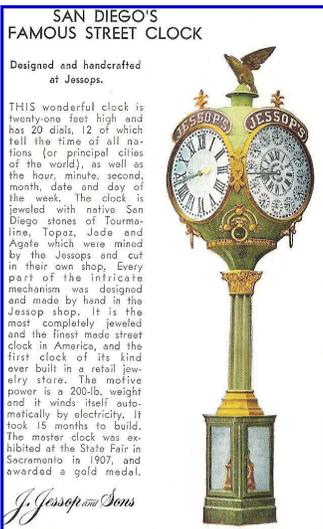
Joseph opened San Diego's first watch repair & jewelry shop at 1317 F St in 1891; he moved the shop to 910 Fifth Ave in



The shop where the street clock was built in 1907.

1896; moved again to 952 Fifth Ave in 1906 where Claude Ledger, an Elgin Watch School graduate was given the task of building a street-clock to be installed in front of the 952 Fifth Ave shop. "The clock was completed and working when Theodore Roosevelt's "Great White Fleet" steamed into San Diego in 1907" – (from a "FEDCO" magazine article). The shop was relocated once more to 1041 Fifth Ave in 1927 and the clock was moved (under the guidance of the clock's builder, Claude Ledger) to the front of that shop.

The Jessop's commissioned a postcard to be used as advertisement for their jewelry store: it reads "SAN DIEGO'S FAMOUS STREET CLOCK



SAN DIEGO'S FAMOUS STREET CLOCK

Designed and handcrafted at Jessop's.

THIS wonderful clock is twentyone feet high and has 20 dials, 12 of which tell the time of all nations (or principal cities of the world), as well as the hour, minute, second, month, date and day of the week. The clock is jeweled with native San Diego stones of Tourmaline, Topaz, Jade and Agate which were mined by the Jessops and cut in their own shop. Every part of the intricate mechanism was designed and made by hand in the Jessop shop. It is the most completely jeweled and the finest made street clock in America, and the first clock of its kind ever built in a retail jewelry store. The motive power is a 200-lb. weight and it winds itself automatically by electricity. It took 15 months to build. The master clock was exhibited at the State Fair in Sacramento in 1907, and awarded a gold medal.

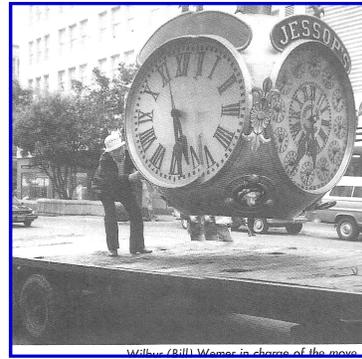
J. Jessop and Sons

FAMOUS STREET CLOCK

This wonderful clock is 21 feet high, and has 20 dials, 12 of which {sub-dials of the head's east-facing side} tell the time of all nations (or principal cities of the world) {New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Milan, Capetown, St. Petersburg, Calcutta, Melbourne, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Mexico City}, as well as the hour, minute, second, month, date and day of the week. The clock is jeweled with native San Diego stones of Tourmaline, Topaz, Jade and Agate which were mined by the Jessops {in the Jessop's mine} and cut in their

own shop. Every part of the intricate mechanism was designed and made by hand in the Jessop shop. It is the most completely jeweled and finest made street clock in America, and the first clock of its kind ever built in a retail jewelry store. The motive power is a 200-lb weight and it winds itself automatically by electricity. {At some time, the designed clock's motive power of 200 pounds was reduced somewhat.} It took 15 months to build. The master clock was exhibited at the State Fair in Sacramento in 1907 and awarded a gold medal."

In 1984, a Jessop jewelers store was being readied in the new Horton Plaza shopping center. The clock was to be moved, this time under the guidance of Bill Wemer {a member of Ch59 May 1970 to June 1980}, to the new store in time for Horton Plaza's grand opening. {See the Aug 1988,



Wibus (Bill Wemer is in charge of the move.)

NAWCC Bulletin article: "The Jessop Street Clock: A San Diego Landmark" -- A photo from the article and duplicated here: Bill Wemer guiding the clock's huge 4-faced head (separated from its movement-housing and supporting-post) from the flatbed truck used to transport it for the move.) The use of a

helicopter to move the clock intact, had been considered, but was thought to be too risky.

{The Jessop Street-Clock has always had a vault beneath it to provide space for the pendulum to swing and for a weight to fall (it also had an electric rewind for the weight). At the Horton Plaza the vault is in the parking structure and a near-catastrophe occurred when a car accidentally ran into the vault -- fortunately no major damage was done to the mechanism! A ¼ hp motor is mounted on an angle-iron rack suspended from the ceiling to rewind the weight which powers the clock for about 9 hours. Some historical items are stored in the vault such as: replaced parts from the clock; 4 old incandescent light bulbs that had been used to keep the movement dry; protective bars designed to prevent breakage to the glass-enclosed movement-housing from out-of-control horses.}

Only four times has the clock stopped by itself. Once in the city's early days when a team of horses got out-of-hand allowing the wagon's "tongue" to go through the clock's base, stopping the pendulum. The second time it stopped during an earthquake. The third time, the clock stopped on March 22, 1935, the day Claude Ledger (the clock's builder) died -- no mechanical failure was found -- Ripley's *Believe It or Not* carried the story. The fourth time the clock stopped, was in 2009 near the time that the clock's newer caretaker Bill Wemer died (he died April 13, 2009).

Jim Jessop had a premonition, in April 2009, when he heard the long time caretaker of the historic Jessop's Jewelers Street-Clock (Bill Wemer) had died. Jim, the great-grandson of Joseph Jessop went to Horton Plaza to check on his family's 102-year-old timepiece. Indeed, the 22-foot-tall landmark offered the correct time only twice a day -- the clock had stopped. Jim Jessop launched a restoration effort to return the ornate, black and gold timepiece to working order. He said "It's got a lifetime warranty by the Jessop family"! Paul Smith of "the House of Clocks" was commissioned to bring the clock back to life.

Nov 6, 2009, (San Diego Union-Tribune) -- "Landmark clock gets a hand from family": The Jessop street clock was rededicated at Horton Plaza, with about 50 members of the Jessop family present. Ninety-eight year old David Jessop Sr. gave a gentle push to the pendulum to restart the timepiece that his grandfather created.

The Jessop's Street-Clock was made a San Diego landmark (#372) by the city's Historical Resources Board.