

Sneidman's Clock

Sneidman's Clock as told to Patchwork by Bruce Bowman.

Interviewed by Tyler Dilg and Colin Barton in the spring of 2005

Bruce Sneidman's clock is one of only two clocks that keep track of Bloomsburg's "official" time. The clock was owned by Mr. Bruce Bowman's father before him. It got the name Sneidman's from his mother's side of the family. The original clock was built in the mid-1930s. In 1965 the clock was hit by a truck and needed repair.

Bruce Bowman is the owner of Sneidman's Jewelry Store. He is also the owner of Sneidman's Clock that sits adjacent to the store. His store is located at 130 East Main Street in Bloomsburg. He was born in Bloomsburg and has lived here his entire life. He resides near Bloomsburg University.

PATCHWORK: When was the clock built?

BOWMAN: The clock was built about 1930.

PATCHWORK: Do you know the name of the company that built the clock?

BOWMAN: Yeah, it's a company that's in western PA, no longer in business. It's called Black Street Clock Company in Monaca, Pennsylvania, I guess that's out around Pittsburgh.

PATCHWORK: Why was the clock built in front of the store?

BOWMAN: It's kind of advertisement so people will notice where the store with the clock out front is.

PATCHWORK: About how much did the clock cost to build and what would you estimate the clock to cost today?

BOWMAN: The clock, when it was built, I believe it was somewhere around \$4,000, and back in that time that was an awful lot of money. Today it's probably somewhere between twenty and thirty thousand dollars.

PATCHWORK: What approval was required from the town?

BOWMAN: At the point in time there were no codes to be complied with, so there was no approval necessary.

PATCHWORK: Has the clock ever needed any repairs?

SmashBOWMAN: It's needed two types of repairs over the years. In 1958, a truck delivering merchandise on Main Street knocked the clock over, and it was knocked over so it was impaled on one of the parking meters right next to it, which is kind of unfortunate and then

later that year it was rebuilt and there was a big christening of the clock, where at that time WHLM came up and broke a bottle of 7-Up or something on top of the clock in order to inaugurate the clock back into existence. That was done on Christmas Eve. And the second thing was that about 4 years ago the electric motor inside the clock quit so we had to replace the electric motor.

PATCHWORK: Is it a target for vandalism?

BOWMAN: It's been... yeah... to a certain extent. It's been shot twice, with a .32 caliber pistol. It was shot from Berrigan's towards the clock which is pretty amazing because Berrigan's is right across the street from the police station. It broke the dial and it broke the glass on the outside of the clock the bullets were recovered therefore we know it was a .32 caliber. We don't know who did it. And it's had various times where chewing gum and various things have been written on the clock, but it holds up pretty well.

PATCHWORK: How do you make adjustments to the clock for like day-lights saving time?

BOWMAN: Well it runs on 110 volts pardon me, I mean 35 volts and we have, there's a gear inside the clock that we access through a panel. And we can then adjust the clock by opening that panel up to adjust it.

PATCHWORK: Does it keep accurate time?

BOWMAN: Since it's an electric motor, yes it does. It doesn't gain or lose any... very accurate.

PATCHWORK: What's the clock's power source and who pays for it?

BOWMAN: I pay for it and it comes through the store. It goes under the sidewalk up to the clock.

PATCHWORK: What are your plans for the clock after you retire?

BOWMAN: It's part of the store. It'll probably stay here as long as whoever has the store.

PATCHWORK: The company that built the clock, what else do they make, do you know?

BOWMAN: Well since they are out of business, obviously nothing now cause they're out of business, but I think that's what they made, was street clocks. They made street clocks probably that were sold all over the country, or perhaps all over the world.