

## **Tall case or Grandfather Clock by William S. Ferguson, Silversmith and Clockmaker, Elgin (1830s)**

Thought to have been made in the 1830s by William S. Ferguson in Elgin, this tall case clock was donated to Elgin Museum in 2021 by Rick Clemente. The building depicted on the decorative clock face has yet to be identified.

Mr Clemente believes that his grandfather (George Taylor) may have purchased the clock in 1904 at which time he also bought "The Laird's House" at Dykeside, near Alves. Soon after, Mr Taylor moved to America at which time the house (and clock) was gifted to his mother who lived on in the house until her death (sometime between 1911-1919).

Mr Clemente continues: *"How the clock was shipped to America in the early 1950s, and who shipped it are a mystery to me. The clock was shipped from Elgin to San Francisco in 1952. My father (John A. Clemente) retrieved it from customs and brought it to China Lake, California (A Naval Ordinance Test Station in the middle of the Mojave Desert, where we lived). He had the clock fixed in handyman fashion and got it running.*

*The very dry desert climate was drying out the wood and the clock was disassembled and moved to be placed in my grandfather's (George Taylor) home in Los Angeles. He passed away January 23, 1953, literally while the clock was being moved.*

*The clock remained in Los Angeles until my grandmother's death in 1962. After a decade in Santa Monica, the clock was cleaned and set-up in Camarillo, California in my mother's "active retirement" home in a narrow entrance hallway.*

*It kept pretty good time until the Northridge Earthquake struck on January 17 1994 at 4:30 am local time. The 6.7 quake's epicenter was just in the next valley from Camarillo. The clock tipped forward and fell across the hall, stopping at about 60° from vertical and leaning on the opposite wall. The main plank "back" was severely damaged; splintering, but not separating completely. Remarkably, the brass finials, the side windows, face and glass door were not destroyed. Some of the veneer on the door was smashed.*

*In the late 1990s, my oldest brother arranged for the clock to be disassembled and shipped to his home in suburban Boston. His intention was to make the clock restoration a retirement "hobby." After his death in 2009, I inherited the clock, still crated from its previous move, and untouched. I shipped it to my home just outside Albuquerque, New Mexico, that spring. I had the clock professionally repaired.*

*No attempt was made to return the clock to "as new," but rather to restore it functionally and stabilize the structural integrity of the clock. The majority of the repair involved removing and replacing the one-inch-thick poplar plank that makes up the "back bone" of the clock. We were able to match the wood species, albeit from the wrong continent."*