

## ***Rodney Brace Clock Chronology***

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Rodney Brace made wooden movement clocks in North Bridgewater, MA from 1831 to 1835<sup>1,2</sup>. Clocks contain both Torrington / East-West and Terry type movements. A number of Brace clocks are housed in spectacular and, in some instances, unique cases. Written records suggest he was in partnership with Isaac Packard although only clocks with either Brace or Packard's name, but not both, are found on extant labels. In addition, Packard labels state North-West Bridgewater as the origin with a Dedham, MA label printer while all Brace labels cite North Bridgewater as the origin with all known Taunton, MA label printers.

Since Brace was originally from Torrington one can assume that the first clocks that he made contained Torrington movements. In fact, in the Hodges book<sup>3</sup> contained a Rodney Brace letter to Erastus Hodges (his movement supplier in Torrington) dated Aug. 4, 1831 states that he is "in want of some more clocks" suggesting that he had brought movements with him when he came to North Bridgewater earlier in the year (although no record exists that this was actually the case). Sometime later he began to use Terry style movements but when this began is not known or whether he was making clocks with both types of movements simultaneously. The printers' names found on Brace clocks were researched in order to provide further insight into the Brace clock chronology.

Figures 1 & 2 illustrate the two types of labels found in Brace Clocks. Figure 1 is the label found in Brace clocks with Torrington style movements while Figure 2 is the label found in clocks with Terry style movements. The major difference between the two labels is the 1830 United States census by state found on the right-hand side of the Torrington movement label (Figure 1). Differences also exist in the wording and structure mainly due to the presence of vertical movement support rails found in Terry movement clocks.

Three types of Terry movements have been identified in Brace clocks<sup>4</sup>: Type 8.135 produced by Eli and George Bartholomew, Type 8.137 produced by Eli and George Bartholomew or Eli or George on their own, and Type 9.223 produced in Chauncey's Boardman's shop. Clocks with the Type 8.137 movement are by far the more prevalent. Known production dates of the Bartholomew movements are not very helpful in determining when Brace began to use these movements.

For example, according to Roberts and Taylor, Eli and George Bartholomew began making the 8.135 movement in approximately 1831 and then transitioned to the 8.137 movement which they made until 1833<sup>5</sup>. In 1833 George and Eli severed their partnership but both continued to make the 8.137 movement. Since Brace clocks are known with the 8.135 movement, the approximate dates given above suggests that he may have started using this movement early on but it is impossible to say when with any certainty.

Examining the known printers of Brace labels; there are five known Brace labels printers (see Table 1). The clock movements where the respective labels are found and some details about the printers themselves were gleaned mainly from a Taunton History<sup>6</sup> found on the Internet and historical information on newspapers found on the Library of Congress's website *Chronicling America*<sup>7</sup>.



Bradford label alone (printer number 4 in the Table) is the only one that was found on both Torrington and Terry movement containing clocks. This label serves as the separation point between the two types of clocks. Only for two of the five printers are the exact dates known for when they were actually in business as printers of the Sun newspaper: James Thurber and Seth Bradford. Given the dates for Thurber he is most likely the first printer that Brace used until sometime in 1832 when Thurber moved to Plymouth, MA.

The next 4 printers are all linked by the fact that Seth Bradford is involved in each (assuming Bradford is the same person in each) but little could be found that discusses his relationship as a printer with the other people. Instead, various business relationships are mentioned. Martin & Bradford's name is only found on labels in Brace clocks containing Terry 30-hour and 8-day movements. Because of this one can assume they were the last printer used with likely dates from July 1834 until the end of Brace's clock business in 1835.

Although it appears movements were still being made in Erastus Hodges' clock shop in Torrington (by both Edmund Wooding and Elliott Tallmadge who was Wooding's partner from 1833 to 1835) until 1837, it appears Rodney Brace had stopped using Torrington movements in his clocks by mid-1834. In fact, the Hodges' papers show that the last documented interaction between Brace and Packard and Erastus Hodges was Oct. 2, 1832.

I could find no specific details on the two printers listed between James Thurber and Seth Bradford. Since their labels have only been found in Torrington movement clocks, their approximate dates of operation must be between mid-1832 until the end of 1833. Since the Prince & Bradford label is much more common than the Bradford and \_\_\_\_\_y or g label (only 1 known example of the latter has been observed), one can assume that Prince & Bradford made most of the labels during this period.

In conclusion, the data show that it is possible to determine approximate dates of Brace clock manufacture by comparing printers, types of movements and known historical data.

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#### References

1. "Torrington" Clocks by Chris Bailey, NAWCC Bulletin, V. 15, #161, Dec., 1972, p. 828-831.
2. Erastus Hodges 1781-1847 by Theodore B. Hodges, Phoenix Publishing, 360 pages (1994). p. 181-183.
3. Characteristics of Standard Terry-Type 30-Hour Wooden Movements as a Guide to Identification of Movement Makers by Snowden Taylor, NAWCC Bulletin, V. 22, #208, Oct., 1980, p. 442-529.
4. Eli Terry and the Connecticut Shelf Clock by Kenneth D. Roberts and Snowden Taylor, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Ken Roberts Publ. Co., 376 pages (1994). p. 222-227.
5. History of Taunton, Massachusetts, from its settlement to the present time, by Samuel Hopkins Emery, D. Mason & Co. Publ., 768 pages (1893). p. 681-685.
6. [www.chroniclinamerica.loc.gov](http://www.chroniclinamerica.loc.gov). See the U. S. Newspaper Directory for info on newspapers published in Taunton, MA.
7. Ref. 1, p.832.
8. Ref. 3, Chapter 5.
9. Ref. 3, p. 188-189.

Table 1. Known printers found on Rodney Brace labels.

PRINTER'S NAME AS EXACTLY FOUND ON LABEL	MOVEMENT	1830 CENSUS FIGURES	COMMENTS
JAMES THURBER, PRINTER, TAUNTON	Torrington Type 6	Yes	Listed as printer of the Sun newspaper from Nov. 26, 1830 to Mar. 9, 1832. Moved to Plymouth in 1832. Book listing Thurber as printer dated 1831.
PRINCE & BRADFORD, PRINTERS, TAUNTON, MASS.	Torrington Type 6	Yes	Thomas Prince edited the literary paper Village Fire-Fly from 3/28/1831 to 4/16/1832. Issued from the Sun (formerly the Advocate) - Thurber the likely printer.
Bradford & _____y or g, Printers-Taunton	Torrington Type 6	Yes	2nd person could be Israel Amsbury mentioned below. Edmund Anthony who was one of the printers of the Reporter from 1828 to 1829 and the printer of the Taunton Tri-weekly Gazette in 1833 is another possibility. Only 1 example of this label observed thus far.
S. BRADFORD, PRINTER,-TAUNTON, MASS.	Torrington Type 6 and Terry 30-hour	Yes (for Torr.), No (for Terry)	Seth Bradford listed as the printer of the Sun from Dec. 6, 1833 to July 4, 1834 and the Aurora from 1833-1837. He purchased the Reporter along with Israel Amsbury in Dec., 1834 and remained as its publisher along with Amsbury until he retired in Dec., 1837. Book listing S. Bradford as printer dated 1834.
MARTIN & BRADFORD - PRINTERS, TAUNTON or MARTIN & BRADFORD, PRINTERS - TAUNTON	Terry 30-hr. & 8-day	No	Hiram Martin managed the Reporter in 1834 with Samuel Dunbar; sold the paper to Amsbury and Bradford in Dec., 1834. He is listed as printer of the Reporter, Mar. 19, 1834.
Isaac Packard Label: DEDHAM PATRIOT PRESS-MASS-PRINTER	Torrington Type 6	Yes	1833 and 1838 references found for Dedham Patriot Press.
Note: Packard also made an 8-day clock with Type 2.3 Terry mov't. but label printer's name is missing			