

The Library Clock by Paula



I remember the day well—the day I was honored at the Hutchinson Public Library. The ladies of the Fortnightly Club donated me to this new facility in the city of Hutchinson, MN, and the building, including me, was dedicated on June 21, 1904. To think I was called a grandmother clock when I was brand new. What a paradox!

Those early years were satisfying and fulfilling. I proudly displayed the time and chimed each passing hour.

People, young and old, came to the library to enjoy our books, newspapers, and magazines. Families made it an afternoon outing. Adults found novels to immerse themselves in, welcome respites during the Depression and War years. And without fail, children squealed in delight reading our colorful storybooks—until the librarian walked over with a finger to her lips.

I recall one special young girl who regularly visited here like clockwork. She thrived on reading. Time would seem to stand still as she carefully selected her books. Then she glanced at me, and realized time had run out and she needed to hurry home. Oh, that Mary! And to think years later she was in charge of Me, of the whole library, in fact!

My memory has not dimmed with the passage of time, but other parts of me have not fared so well. This grandmother is feeling her age. My face no longer communicates. It is unmoving, expressionless. People glance at me and look away. I am no longer relevant to them. I cannot announce the time with a clear chime. My voice is silenced. I stand tall and still, a relic of the past. But I can still hear.

Two library patrons are talking about something happening in downtown Hutchinson. They said the Hager Jewelry street clock is being reinstalled to its home on Main Street. After three long years, the landmark clock is restored and now returned.

This news exhilarates me. My fellow clock and I are important “moments of time” in the history of Hutchinson. We matter to Hutchinson’s citizens.

Gong! Gong! Gong! My spontaneous chimes of “Welcome Back” startle the patrons, their disbelief obvious on their faces.

Unbounded joy can bring revival to the unlikeliest things. Even a one hundred and nineteen-year-old clock!