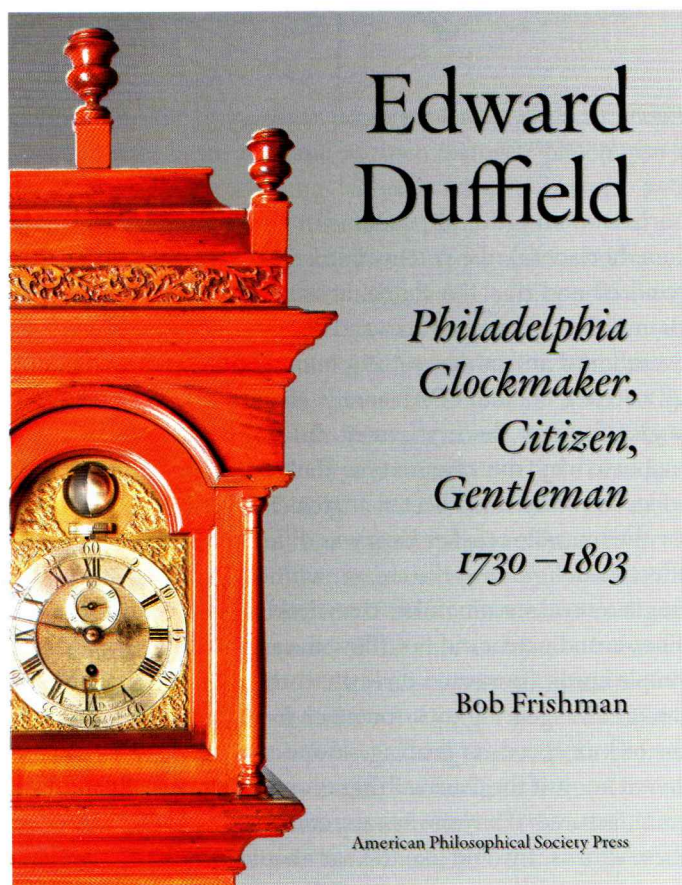


Edward Duffield: Philadelphia Clockmaker, Citizen, Gentleman, 1730-1803

by Kathryn Sullivan

Edward Duffield: Philadelphia Clockmaker, Citizen, Gentleman, 1730-1803. By Bob Frishman. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The American Philosophical Society Press, 2024), hardcover, 256 pages, 227 illustrations. ISBN 9781606180099, \$60.



Bob Frishman's new book *Edward Duffield: Philadelphia Clockmaker, Citizen, Gentleman, 1730-1803* expands current knowledge and literature on historical figures within horology. Though the records of Edward Duffield are few and far between, Frishman places these clues within the context of eighteenth century Philadelphia in an homage to Duffield and the era of his life. Frishman is a member of the Early American Industries Association.

Using arduous research and imagination, Frishman creates a semi-historic narrative of Duffield as a non-Quaker wealthy landowner involved in many aspects of Philadelphia society.

Noting the Calendar Act of 1750 in Great Britain, Frishman positions Duffield's interest in clocks, engraving, and clockmaking as an obvious product of his time, pun intended. Young white elites "were enchanted by beautifully crafted, lifelike machines with ticking heartbeats, shining faces, and gesturing hands." As Duffield records are sparse, Frishman assumes that Duffield did not apprentice with any known clockmaker but rather responded with cunning to a market of fashionable tastes. Somewhat an entrepreneur with the means to open a business, records show Duffield opened a business as a clock and watchmaker in 1751 assuming the roles of manufacture, repair, and restoration (although it is unclear exactly when he first offered horological services and products in his shop). At this time in the eighteenth century, clocks in Philadelphia were made with mostly English parts and movements. There was some finishing and assembly required, as well as engraving their names on movements. However, the assembly itself requires obvious expertise.

Frishman's own personal interest in clocks and clockmaking is evident throughout the passion of the book. Frishman zooms in and out of Duffield's life as a landowner, business owner, and citizen by acknowledging the period and time. Placing Duffield within historic Philadelphia, Frishman incorporates insurance records, charitable donations, and even letters reproduced within the text. Much of the record shows that Benjamin Franklin was a friend and possibly even a mentor, twenty-four years Duffield's senior. While he worked as a journeyman printer, Franklin became friends with the Duffield family living next door in Philadelphia. Frishman discusses the relationship and few remaining records between Duffield and Franklin in chapter nine. While Duffield was unsuccessful in his attempts to seek appointments by the Assembly, he maintained membership in many Philadelphia society committees. At times, the narrative can be chronologically circuitous as Frishman includes many names and dates, and their connection to Edward Duffield can be difficult to follow.

Frishman closes the book with an impressive collection of pictures including information on provenance where found. Bob Frishman did innumerable hours of research, using archives, catalogs, collections, some published works



Figure 1. Clock No. 23, Minnesota private collection. PHOTO BY DAN DESEHY. ALL IMAGES ARE COURTESY OF BOB FRISHMAN.

as well as unpublished manuscripts. Over sixty pages of beautifully archived clock faces, works, and cases close the chapters on Duffield's extant timekeepers. From his written works, like *Edward Duffield: Philadelphia Clockmaker, Citizen, Gentleman, 1730-1803*, to his public lectures, Frishman's zeal and knowledge about early American clockmaking and clockmakers is apparent. Signed hardcover copies of the book are available from the author at www.edwardduffield.com.

Author

Kathryn Sullivan is a woodworker focused on restoration and conservation based in Dallas, Texas. First informed as an anthropologist, Sullivan treats the trade with a blend of artistic academia and practical woodworking, bringing intersectional approaches to the study and creation of woodworking craft and decorative art. Sullivan is a 2024 Winterthur fellow, marquetry teacher, and book lover.



Figure 2. Clock No. 11, sold at Brunk Auctions, Asheville, North Carolina, from collection of late dealer C.L. Prickett.

BRUNK AUCTIONS, SEPTEMBER 16-27, 2022, LOT 109+.

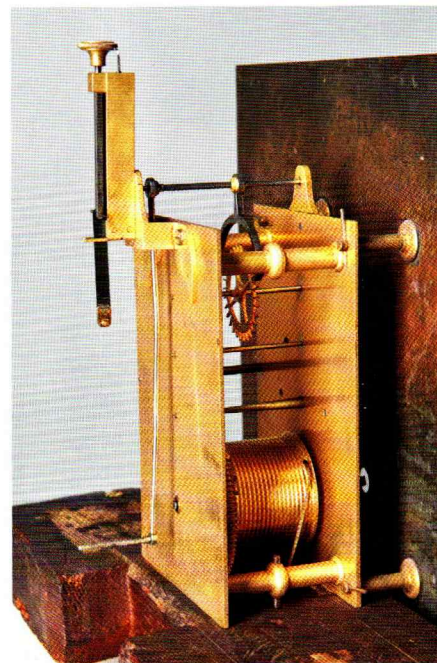


Figure 3. Side view of Duffield movement, showing pendulum-suspension system allowing fine slow-fast adjustments.

PHOTO BY JOHN WYNN.