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**FRENCH “NOBLE SAVAGE” CLOCK
THE COFFEE DELIVERY BOY**



Empire period, circa 1805

H. 29 cm (11”), W. 29 cm (11”), D. 10 cm (4”)

REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY: Tardy, *La Pendule Française*, 2ème partie: du Louis XVI à nos jours, 1969; *Pendule au "Nègre"*: 29 avril-12 juin 1978, Saint-Omer, Musée de l'Hôtel Sandelin, catalogue de l'exposition; Marie-Christine Delacroix, *Les pendules au nègre*, L'Estampille, Août 1978; Jean-Dominique Augarde, *Les Ouvriers du Temps*, 1996; Pierre Kjellberg, *La Pendule Française*, 1997; Elke Niehüser, *French Bronze Clocks*, 1999; *Catalogue raisonné* du musée François Duesberg, 2004.







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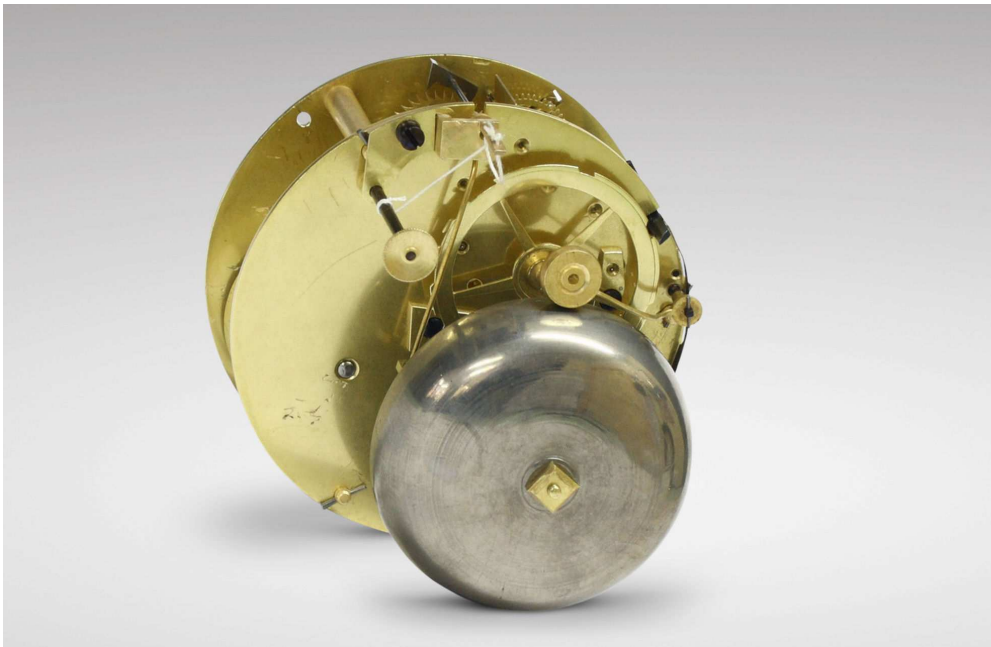
Round movement with anchor recoil escapement, silk suspension, countwheel strike on a silvered bell. Two-week autonomy.

Enamel dial with Roman numerals for the hours and Arabic numerals for the quarters, bearing the signature *J... Cellier à Paris* (recorded as active in rue du Bourg-l'Abbé in 1806). Finely cut, engraved and gilt brass hands of the *fleuron* style.

Ormolu and black patinated bronze case representing a bare-chested blackamoor busy pouring the coffee from his back pack into a large barrel, containing the clock movement. A seven-branches palm tree to the right, a long stick in his right hand. Beautifully painted eyes with brown pupils. Base with ormolu relief decorations applied, the bees symbolizing the labour capacity of the blackamoor, but also the symbol of Napoleon Bonaparte. The central scene depicting the harvest of the sugarcane in a typical colonial fashion. Five turned ormolu acorn feet.

H. 29 cm (11”), W. 29 cm (11”), D. 10 cm (4”)





BLACKAMOOR OR “NOBLE SAVAGE” MANTLE CLOCKS

The trend for Blackamoor or “Noble Savage” mantle clocks seems to have emerged during the Directoire period and continued throughout the First Empire. Clockmakers were enthusiastic for this novel exotic style inspired by the most successful literary texts of the second half of the eighteenth century. Celebrated novels like *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel de Foe (1719), *Paul and Virginia* by Bernardin de Saint Pierre (1789) and Chateaubriand’s *Atala* (1805) advocated a return to the bucolic virtues of nature, substantiating the myth of the ‘noble savage’ and contributing to the success of this new type of mantle clock.

Themes like the encounter of Robinson Crusoe and Friday, Atala freeing Chactas chained to a palm tree, or Paul and Virginia carried by two blackamoors, became favourites depicting noble blackamoors working, smoking, pouring coffee, as porters (fig.1) or as sailors leaning against cotton bales. These blackamoor figures embodied the spirit in which the Europeans imagined the transplanted black Africans of America.



Fig.1 *Blackamoor porter* (Private Collection)

Gradually the designation ‘blackamoor’ came to represent the fusion of both black African slave and American Indian characterized by the feathered headdress. Later the iconography became more specific: America was symbolized by a huntress adorned and crowned with feathers and taming an alligator, while the figure of Africa, wearing a simple headband, was herself accompanied by a lioness and a tortoise (fig. 2).



Fig.2 Africa, model by Jean-Simon Deverberie (Private Collection)

These new representations were compatible with the stylistic evolution of bronze decorative ornamentation, enabling an often-dazzling play of matt or burnished gilt and bronze patinas. The models were conceived around a central core – usually the breeches or loincloth – to which the various body parts were inserted and attached. Decorative bracelets on the arms, wrists and ankles concealed the assembly points of each element. Black varnish applied to the body reproduced the colour of the skin, accentuating the vibrancy of the painted eyes, which were either glass or enamel.

The first dated mantle clock of this type was the celebrated *Pendule à la négresse* made in 1784 for Marie-Antoinette by Furet and Gaudon, clockmakers to the King. During the nineteenth century, Jean-Simon Deverberie (1764-1824), master bronzier and clockmaker established at Rue Barbette in 1800, was the undisputed master of these so-called mantle clocks “à l’Américaine”. Creator of exceptional pieces, Deverberie’s precious drawings are now housed at the Cabinet des estampes de la Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. *L’Indien et l’Indienne enlacés* ranks among his most beautiful pieces, probably inspired by Bernardin de Saint Pierre’s and Chateaubriand’s idyllic texts.

« AMERICA »

Sold by Jacques NÈVE in 2011



**L'AMÉRIQUE, A FRENCH CONSULATE PERIOD (1799-1803)
ORMOLU AND PATINATED BRONZE
'AU BON SAUVAGE' MANTEL CLOCK**

America is represented by a woman, partially covered in a feather dress, the Caiman crocodile is a characteristic of the new world. This unique version of this particular model is possibly one of the very first made, with a pink ormolu base with matted garlands held by ribbon-snakes on a white marble plinth.

Also to be noted on this particular model are the wider ankle bracelets, the tight necklace and the blue eyes, all indicating a very early model made by Jean-Simon de Verberie for the clockmaker Bausse, established here Cour Nandar N° 7.

Enamel dial with Arabic numerals, extra outer quarter-hours markers and inner indications for a Revolutionary period 30-day calendar.

Very finely pierced gilt hands for the hours and minutes, blued steel hand for the calendar.

Silk suspension and anchor recoil escapement, countwheel strike on a silvered bell.

Autonomy 3 weeks.

Height 46cm (18 in).