

Jefferson Golden Hour

by Roger Russell

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Catalog Number 580-101

This was the first of all the Jefferson Electric clocks to be manufactured. Jefferson later built other models but the Golden Hour was the most popular. The Golden Hour clock remained in production essentially unchanged until the clock division closed in August 1991, a time period of almost 41 years for this single model. About two million of these were sold over the years.

[Golden Hour History](#)

[Early Manual](#)

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Golden Hour History

Golden Hour Clock Production Began in Late 1949

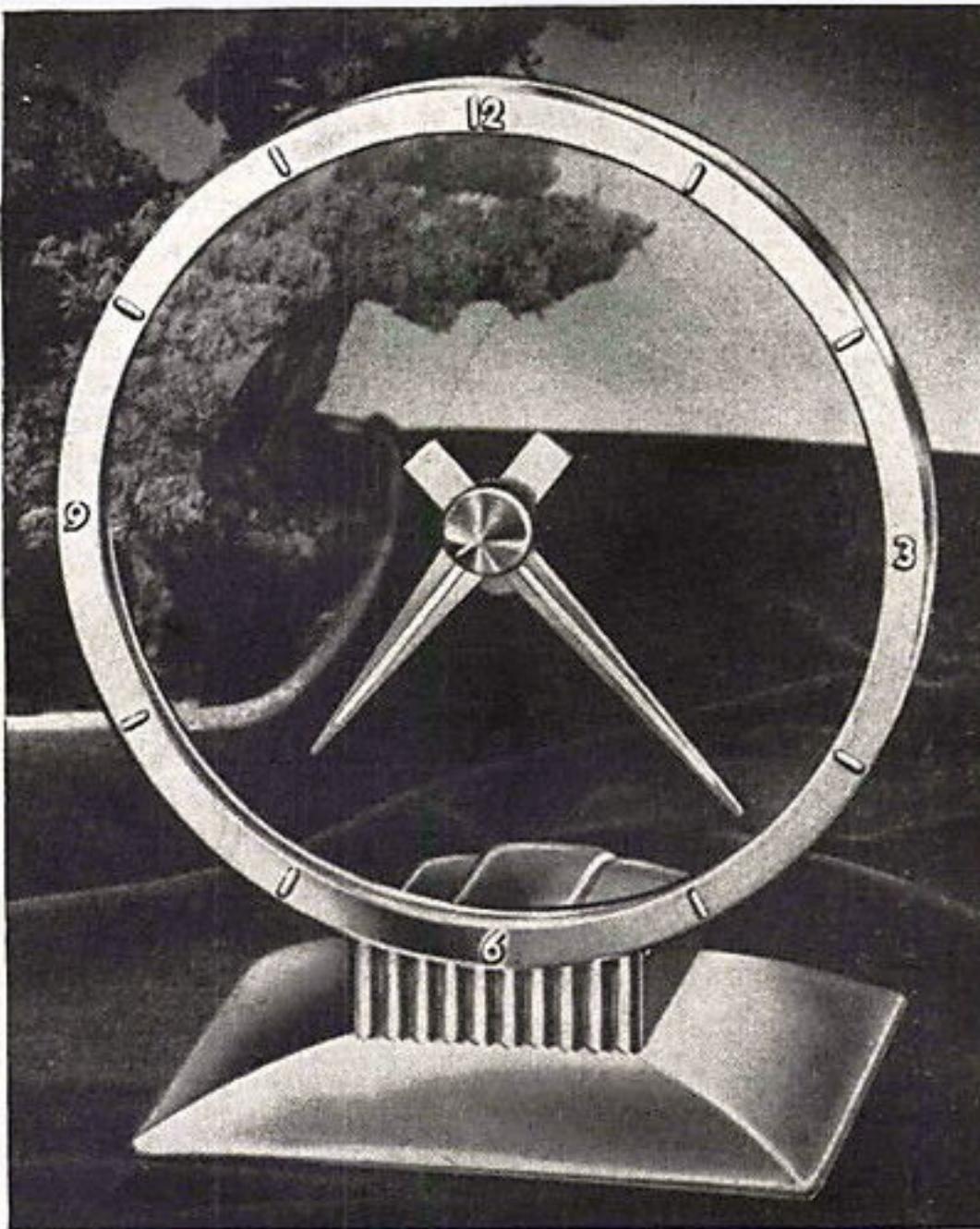


Production started on December 2, 1949. This picture shows the production line at about that time. All clocks were run for 72 hours to insure proper operation before they were packaged and shipped. The date of manufacture for most Golden Hours can be found stamped on the inside of the base. This can be found by removing the two screws that hold the base plate. Sometimes the numbers are a little smeared. The Golden Hour clock remained in production essentially unchanged until August 1991, a time period of almost 41 years for this single model. About two million of these were sold over the years. The initial retail price was \$19.95 but went to \$22.95 by the following December. It was \$23.95 in 1956, \$48.00 in 1977 and \$70.00 in 1984.

DIFFERENT

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Here's how the Jefferson Golden Hour electric clock operates... The crystal moves. A gear driven by motor in base meshes with the geared edge of the crystal. The crystal revolves and carries with it the minute hand, which is attached to crystal by a friction grip. Hour hand on back of crystal is attached to minute hand and thru a train of gears, moves one-twelfth of a revolution for every complete revolution of the minute hand. In other words, the gear-driven crystal carries the minute hand around to time the minutes. The minute hand, in turn, drives the hour hand to time the hours.



JEFFERSON GOLDEN HOUR ELECTRIC CLOCK

Durable cast base and dial, heavily 24 carat gold plated, rich satin finish. Trim modern hands and Arabic numerals, treated with radium for easy time-telling day or night. Each clock, factory pre-tested under rigid requirements for split-second accuracy. Non-scratching plastic baseplate protects furniture. Dimensions: 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches overall height, 7 $\frac{7}{16}$ inches diameter. Base: 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches wide, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long.

RETAIL

22.50

Here is an advertisement for the Golden Hour from a 1952 publication. The word crystal has been used frequently in this ad to describe the glass. When I researched the qualifications for crystal and glass and tried an experiment, I found that the glass used in the clock is not crystal but ordinary window glass. See my page about the [Jefferson glass](#).

Because of the weight and color of the clock, it could be thought of as being made of brass. However, the ring and base are made of a cast zinc alloy. See my page showing a cross section and a [metal analysis](#). They are plated with pure 24-karat gold. See my [Gold Reference Page](#) for information about gold and karat ratings. The clock has a brushed satin finish.

The dial frame ring has raised numerals at 3, 6, 9, and 12 o'clock as well as raised radial lines at the other hours. Production began with luminescent paint in the numerals and lines of the hands. The hour and minute hands also had luminescent paint. These can be seen in the photo at the right as a very light greenish white. The luminescent material is actually radium paint and is still [radioactive](#) but now glow very little or not at all in the dark. However, the radium is still active and has a half life of 1600 years. Later Golden Hour versions do not have painted luminescent areas. Luminescent paint has been found on Golden Hours as late as 1965.



The glass is mounted in a steel, nickel plated ring gear. It is single strength [select grade glass](#) and is 3/32"

thick. The retainer ring on the back of the clock) is steel, plated with 24 kt gold. [Replacement glass instructions](#) are available including the purchase of shatter resistant acrylic instead of glass.

Dimensions are 8-7/8" high and 4-1/2" deep. The outside diameter of the outer ring is 7-7/16". Weight is 2.3 lbs. The cord and plug are brown plastic.

The plastic bottom cover is Eastman Chemical Products Corp. "Zenite II" and is also known as cellulose acetate butyrate. The early Golden Hours have a maroon colored base plate that shows a rating of 115V.A.C. 60 CY 2.5 watts and patent pending. Later maroon plates have the patent number 2,642,713. This patent is actually for a different clock made by the Etalage Reclame Corporation of New York. Jefferson bought the patent rights and restyled it to become the Golden Hour, Exciting Hour, Golden Minute, Golden View and Golden Helm. For more information, see [The Clocks of Leendert Prins](#)

The base plates were later changed to black and have been seen on clocks dating as far back as 10-14-64. These have the patent number and a power rating of 2.5 watts. Later black plates have a date such as J8405 (May 1984) melted into it. The power rating was changed to 3 watts and the patent number is no longer mentioned. All plates, maroon or black, have the UL listed symbol. All molded plates have a key to locate the rear of the plate in the base.



An unusual bottom plate has been found on two Golden Hours. These are made of fiberglass reinforced maroon plastic sheet material that is 1/8" thick. There is no molded lettering or a key at the rear. Instead, there is a self adhesive paper label on the plate. The label is 3-3/4" X 2-7/8". No patent number is mentioned. The clocks are dated 8-78 and 11-79. Both dates are written on the inside of the clock base with a black marking pen.

The Golden Hours are often powered with an International Register synchronous motor located in the base. Other motor sources are the Haydon Mfg. Company and Bowman Electrical Products Corporation. The output gear from the motor gearbox has 27 teeth and rotates at 1/6 rpm. These mate with the rim gear that has 270 teeth. This 10:1 reduction results in the clock face turning at the required 1/60 rpm, or one revolution per hour.

The hand assembly is made of brass and is 24 kt gold plated. The picture shows the rear of the hands and the pear shaped counterweight assembly. The minute hand is located at front of the glass and is attached to it by friction so that it can be easily turned to set to the desired minutes. The hour hand and gear assembly is located behind the glass and can turn freely. A shaft attached to the center of the glass has a gear in the counterweight gear assembly. The counterweight always stays in a vertical location and provides a fixed position needed to drive other gears that advance the hour hand as the glass turns.



A small counterweight of metal is attached to the rear portion of the hour hand. It's the same shape and can be seen behind the main counterweight near the bottom of the picture. It serves to hold the hour hand in proper position relative to the minute hand. See my page for information on [troubleshooting](#), [restoration](#) and [improvements](#) of these clocks.

Here is a portion of one of the earlier manuals that came with the Golden Hour.

Here's My Secret



HOW YOUR NEW JEFFERSON "Golden Hour" CLOCK WORKS



The Crystal moves — driven by an electric motor in the clock base. The motor gear meshes with the geared edge of the crystal—causing it to revolve.



The minute hand is attached by friction to the crystal which makes a complete revolution every hour.



The hour hand is actuated by the minute hand through a train of reduction gears . . . so that it moves only one-twelfth as fast.

In other words the gear-driven crystal carries the minute hand around to time the minutes. The minute hand drives the hour hand to time the hours.

I'm Easy to Care For...

CLEANING AND OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

1. The "Golden Hour" operates on AC current, 110-125 volts, 60 cycles only.
2. To set clock:
 - (a) Turn minute hand in clockwise direction to desired position.
 - (b) Turn counterweight on back of clock until hour hand is in desired position.

IMPORTANT: Do not turn minute hand in counter-clockwise direction.

3. The "Golden Hour" does not require oiling.
4. Remove household dust with a soft, dry brush. Clean glass with a soft, damp cloth.

CAUTION. Do not permit water to reach clock mechanism.





Care of the Golden Hour

instructions . . .

The Jefferson "Golden Hour" operates on AC current, 110-125 volts, 60 cycles only.

To set clock—turn minute hand in **clockwise direction only** to desired position. Regardless of its position, never attempt to restrain the hour hand from moving while doing this. (Holding the hour hand directly or through nose cone while setting minute hand may damage mechanism.) After minute hand is set, counterweight on back of dial can be "flipped" freely in either direction until hour hand is in correct position.

The "Golden Hour" has a self-starting synchronous motor and will run accurately from the time it is connected. The clock has been permanently lubricated at the factory—**never attempt to oil**.

Household dust and marks can be removed easily with a soft damp cloth. Never use cleansers or submerge clock in water.

Here is a copy of a portion of the instruction book that came with the Golden Hour that I bought from Jefferson about 1980. It replaces the earlier cartoon manual.

Please note that you should never attempt to oil the clock.

Various Sales Promotions

Advertising for the Golden Hour began in several different magazines such as the New Yorker (5-13-1950), Coronet (12-1950), jeweler's catalogs and mail order catalogs.

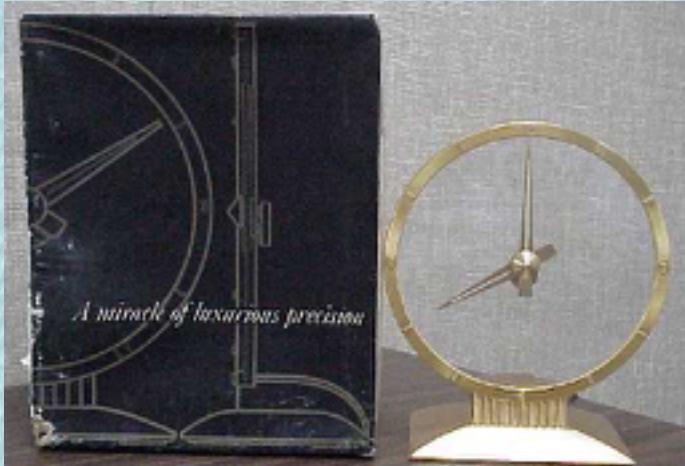
In 1953, Philco purchased 50,000 Jefferson Golden Hour clocks for use in one of their most successful premium programs. The clocks served as an inducement for the consumer to buy Philco TV and buy the console TV instead of their table model.

The Pfister Feed Company used 1,000 Jefferson clocks to persuade the farmers to feed their chickens with their brand of feed. How did they handle the program? Simple: The farmer buys a certain number of feed sacks, and he gets a clock free. This program was so well received that the Pioneer Hybrid Corn Company offered the same program.

Chicago's Plastone Company, manufacturer of Turtle Wax Auto Wax, used 3,000 Golden Hours as a "dealer loader" for gas station owners.

The New England regional office of the A & P supermarket chain searched for ways in which to get more people into their stores. The answer: free weekly drawings for fine prizes—including 300 Jefferson clocks.

The picture at the right is a Golden Hour with the original box, a rare find. Thanks to Steve Speece for the photos from his collection.



The picture at the left is the Golden Hour with the end view of the original box. The writing says *A Miracle of Luxurious Precision*.



Literature found in a 1956 jeweler's catalog has the following description:



Golden Hour

One of America's favorite gift ideas. Lovely and fashionable in any decorating scheme. The hands of the Golden Hour "float" in clear crystal with no apparent source of movement. 24-kt. gold-plated...brushed satin finish. Dimensions: 8-7/8" overall height, 7-7/16" diameter.

\$23.95 retail...plus tax

All Jefferson clocks are fully guaranteed...operate on 110-125 volt, 60 cycle AC current.

A Golden Hour clock has been found in Canada that has the words MADE IN U.S.A. stamped in the

metal at the front edge of the base. This may have been required by the Canadian government in order to sell the clock in Canada.

Sales Promotion in Time magazine

The promotion notice was included with the May 7, 1951 issue of Time.

This full page JEFFERSON "Golden Hour" Electric Clock advertisement in TIME attracts the attention of 1,600,000 upper-bracket families *just when they are thinking about new and distinctive gifts for Mother's Day and this year's June brides.*

TIME readers have double-the-average income, are the business and social leaders in practically every U. S. community. They want and can pay for quality gifts in the JEFFERSON price range.

And this timely JEFFERSON advertisement in TIME will help to bring them into your dealers' stores—help build important unit sales with desirable profit margins.

So tell your salesmen to sell retailers on this promotion, and see that they feature JEFFERSON "Golden Hour" Clocks in their window and counter displays now—while this spring gift advertisement in TIME is getting maximum attention from their best customers.

TIME to reach a mass market of
America's best customers

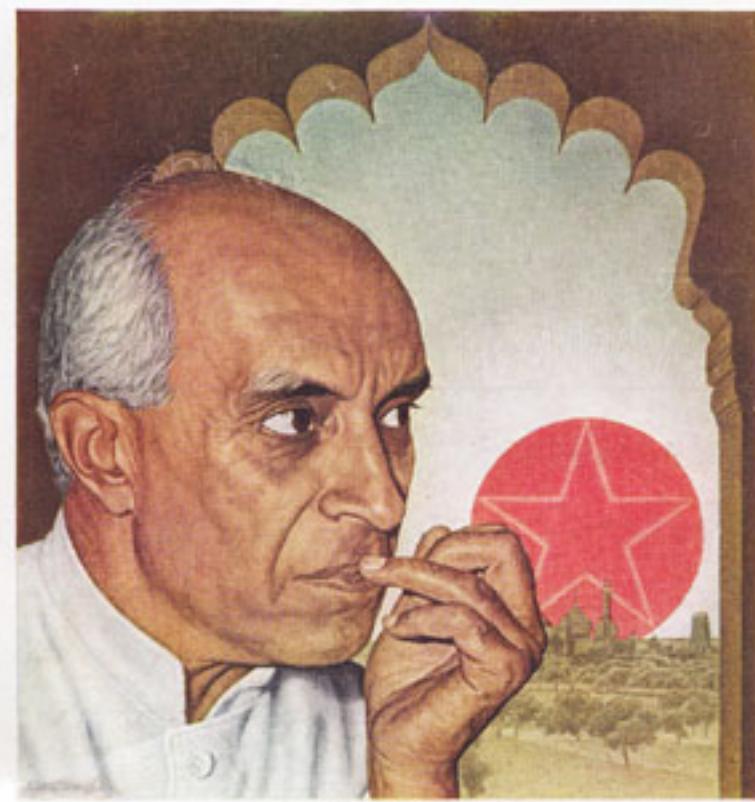


TWENTY CENTS

MAY 2, 1952

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



ASIA'S NEHRU

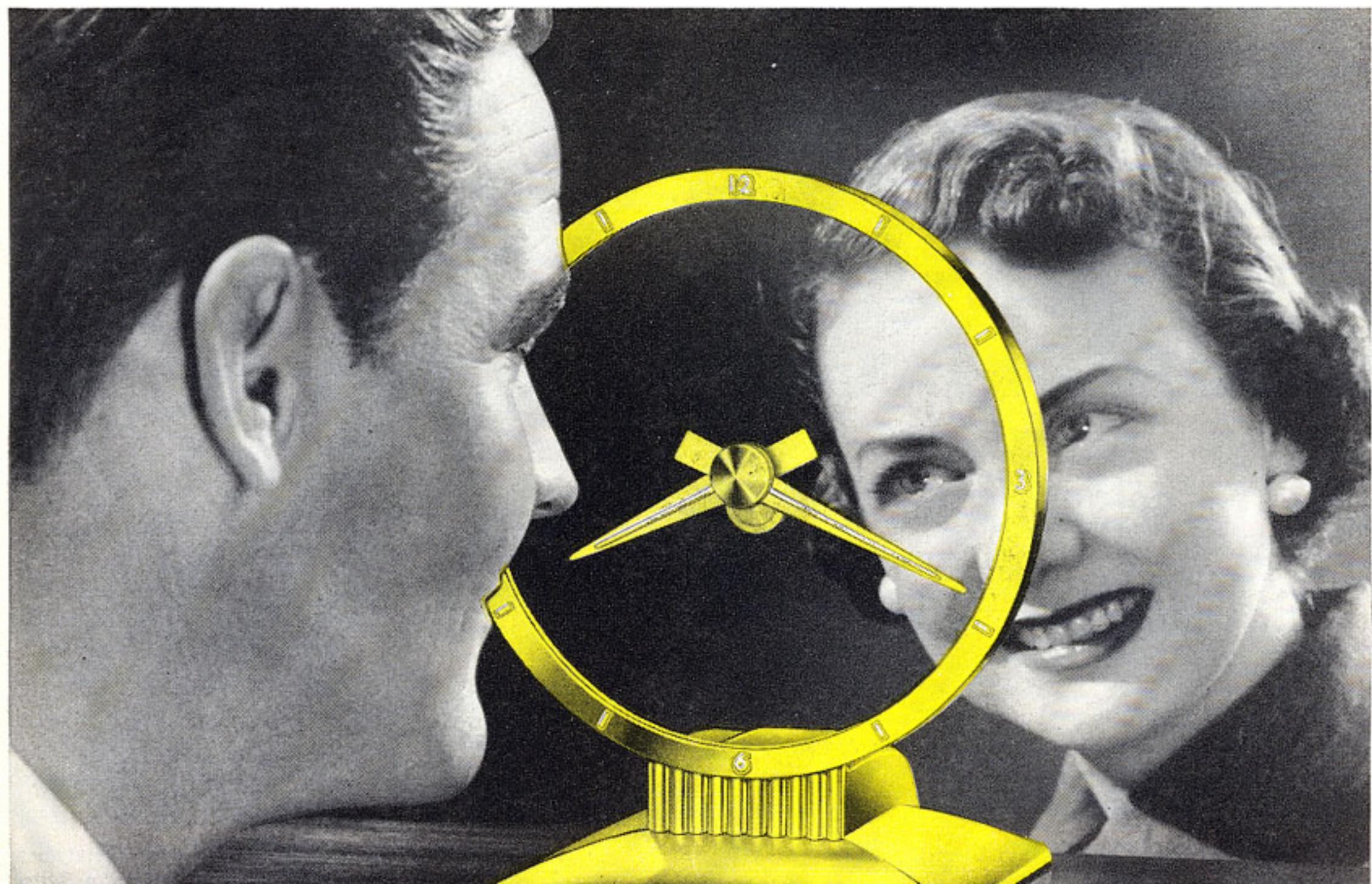
The man on the fence is in a dangerous spot.

\$6.00 A YEAR

ISSUE NO. 1070

VOL. LIV. NO. 19

Jawaharlal Nehru was on the cover



New! *The fascinating gift clock
you can see through!*

So "right" for the bride—for Mother's Day—the conversation piece of any shower, anniversary or birthday. A *new* and *unusual* answer to all your gift problems. Truly a precision timepiece...accuracy guaranteed. The hands float in the center of the "see-thru" crystal. 24-karat gold-plated. At better jewelers and department stores. \$22⁵⁰ plus tax



Perfect on occasional table



Smart on any office desk



Fits any decorating scheme



Packed in a lovely gift carton

Mail this coupon...

for FREE information booklet describing the Jefferson "Golden Hour" Electric Clock in detail (including HOW IT WORKS)...and the location of your nearest dealer.

Jefferson Electric Company, 900 S. 25th Ave., Bellwood, Illinois

Please rush me FREE information booklet describing the fascinating "Golden Hour" electric clock.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... Zone..... State.....



Lucy is with ABC VP Donn Tatum.

It was an appreciation award presented by the
Radio Television Recording Advertising Charities,
which were helped by Lucy and Desi that year, circa 1955.

About This Site

[Return to main
Jefferson page](#)

More text and pictures about Jefferson
will be added as my research continues.
Any comments, corrections, or additions
are welcome.

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