

# Grandfather's Clock

Henry Clay Work

1. G D7 G C G D7

1. G 2. G D7

G D7 G D7 G

C G D7 G C G

C G D7 G

C G D7 G

1. My grandfather's clock was too tall for the shelf  
So it stood ninety years on the floor  
It was taller by half than the old man himself  
But it weighed not a pennyweight more  
It was bought on the morn on the day that he was born  
It was always his treasure and pride  
But it stopped, short, never to go again  
When the old man died

## Chorus:

Ninety years without slumbering  
Tic toc tic toc  
His life's seconds numbering  
Tic toc tic toc  
It stopped, short, never to go again  
When the old man died.

2. In watching its pendulum swing to and fro  
Many hours he had spent when a boy  
And through childhood and manhood, the clock seemed to know  
And to share both his grief and his joy  
For it struck twenty-four when he entered at the door  
With a blooming and beautiful bride,  
But it stopped, short, never to go again  
When the old man died

**Chorus**

- 3 My grandfather said that of those he could hire  
Not a servant so faithful he'd found,  
For it kept perfect time and it had one desire  
At the close of each day to be wound  
At it kept to its place, not a frown upon its face  
At its hands never hung by its side  
But it stopped, short, never to go again  
When the old man died

**Chorus**

4. It rang an alarm in the still of the night,  
An alarm that for years had been dumb  
And we knew that his spirit was pluming for flight  
That his hour of departure had come  
Still the clock kept the time  
With a soft and muffled chime  
As we silently stood by his side  
But it stopped, short, never to go again  
When the old man died

**Chorus**

---

"Grandfather's Clock" is a song written in 1876 by Henry Clay Work.

It is a standard of British brass bands and colliery bands and is also popular in bluegrass music.

Before this song became popular, floor standing clocks were known merely as tall case clocks or longcase clocks. They became known as "grandfather clocks" as a result of this song.

The earliest known recording of this song was performed by Harry Macdonough and the Edison Quartet in 1905.

It was also recorded by Johnny Cash on **Songs of Our Soil** (1959), Tennessee Ernie Ford on **Gather 'Round** (1959), Bing Crosby on **101 Gang Songs** (1961), John Fahey on **Days Have Gone By** (1967), The Country Gentlemen on **On The Road** (1963), The Seldom Scene on **Live At The Cellar Door** (1975), Miles Martin Folk Group on **Miles Martin Folk Group** (1971), Bill Staines With Guy Van Duser on **Old Wood And Winter Wine** (1977), David Grisman & Tony Rice on **Tone Poems** (1994), Trickett on **Gently Down The Stream Of Time** (1977) and many others.

Even though the autoharp is not an historically correct instrument to accompany this, it is so much fun to play that it my preferred accompaniment. I like playing it on the banjo in G but I like it better on the autoharp in F.