



Paperweight Collectors Association, Inc.

Presented at Appleton, Wisconsin May 2005

Jerry Gard

What Makes A Paperweight Special

INTRODUCTION

Indeed, why do we like any paperweight at all? And if we do, why do we collect them? And so many. Some suggest that those of us who have collected for so many years and have collected so many paperweights must be able to guide others as to how and why to collect. I feel that, since the desire to collect comes totally from inside, another's advice, no matter how well intended, can be of only peripheral use. But perhaps, if I describe some of the twists and turns in my own journey through the perils of paperweight collecting, and show you the reasons why some of my weights are more special than others, that your interest might be piqued in some area you had not previously seriously considered, or you may simply understand better some of the forces that led *you* to be here, listening to me. So let us look at some of the weights in my collection which are special to me—I will explain why they are—and maybe my thirty years of collecting will be of some benefit to you. I sincerely hope so.

MY MOST SPECIAL PAPERWEIGHTS

The weight in Figure 1, a rather pedestrian New England Glass Company (NEG) open concentric on poorly formed latticinio, has probably enjoyed more of my attention than any other weight in my collection, simply because it is dated in the center 1825, or so it would seem. This date led me to review all that had been written on the presence in NEG weights of both dates 1825 and 1852. The quest for the truth even brought me to Neenah where I held and photographed one of the best known of the 1825 examples, a spirally faceted, well made crown. I finally proved that the 1825 date is simply the other end of a cane that says 1852, and in the case of my weight and the Bergstrom crown, the cane is simply placed in the weight upside down, and we are reading the wrong end of it. If you want to experience this for yourself, write 1852 on a sheet of paper, and read it backwards by holding it up to the light. You will have to turn it upside down, but if you do, it will read 1825. Mystery solved. So this weight has a special place in my collection, and this study greatly increased my interest in American weights.

This interest led to the acquisition of a number of special NEG weights such as that in Figure 2, an ordinary posy but on a cranberry-filled latticinio and dated 1852—dated lampwork weights are rare, as are cranberry grounds, so this weight is special. Interest in NEG color grounds also led to the purchase of a posy on a most beautiful smoky aqua ground, shown in Figure 3, the ground being almost opalescent, and this also came with the bonus of a ring of huge running rabbits, each with a tiny red eye. Further pursuit of unusual grounds led to the discovery that NEG did make upset muslin. Although they are extremely rare, the star garland in Fig. 4 is on a fine upset muslin which shows off the NEG canes quite nicely. About 15 or so NEG weights are known on upset muslin.

Another NEG weight that falls, in my opinion, in the “special” category, is the garland of flowers

around a nice central cane seen in Fig. 5. Showing a definite St. Louis heritage, this charming weight came from the Fisher collection in Detroit. Mrs. Fisher was heiress to the Fisher(car) Body fortune, and knew Mrs. Bergstrom so well that they sailed to Europe together on the Queen Elizabeth to hunt for paperweights.

Another unusual NEG weight, shown in Figure 6, successfully combines a pom-pom flower with millefiori in a hitherto unknown way. The artistic skill, along with the fine quality of the workmanship, from canes to latticinio, to the cutting, all combine to put this weight solidly in the “special” category. Another NEG weight that fairly shouts “special” is the two rose bouquet with bud in Figure 7. Along with the similar example in the Bergstrom, this weight from the New-York Historical Society (N-YSH) collection, is one of the finest examples of inventive NEG lampwork, and they were probably especially made for some presentation. Even special leaves and stems were constructed so these weights would stand out in all regards. Paul Hollister called this “a rare and wonderful paperweight.” A second great paperweight from the N-YHS is the double overlay upright bouquet of Figure 8. Arguably the most beautiful paperweight NEG ever made, Hollister said of this weight “An extraordinary blending of skills within a unified concept is evident here,” and, in his Encyclopedia, “One of the great paperweights.”

Because Boston and Sandwich (B&S) Glass Company repeated so many flowers, usually poinsettias, on clear glass or ordinary jasper grounds, it is much more difficult to find “special” weights among their products. However, the striped-petalled poinsettia with the large central “B” cane of Figure 9 would certainly qualify. It was surely made as a presentation piece and I believe there are two others; three were probably made to allow for a possible poor result, and the best, which I do not think is this one, was then presented to the lucky recipient, who presumably had an initial “B.”

Moving to more modern weights, another from the N-YHS is seen in Figure 10, one of the wonderful crimped water lilies from Millville. Hollister called this weight “spectacular” and, in his Encyclopedia, “the great waterlily, one of the boldest and most powerful presentations under glass.” Surely such praise warrants the title of “special,” if not “very special.”

As to contemporary weights, I could have chosen fifty, but included only what I consider the finest achievements of the modern artists: Stankard’s “Mountain Laurel”, Danny Salazar’s “First Snow in Kyoto,” Randy Grubb’s cylinder with upright daisies, Victor Trabucco’s giant salamander, Loren Stump’s Portrait Canes weight, and Steve Lundberg’s Monarch butterflies in eucalyptus leaves. I have chosen to picture Steve’s magnum weight here as Figure 11, as a tribute not just to Steve’s fine work but also to the warm and friendly way he treated fellow artists and collectors alike throughout his career as a paperweight artist. Surely all our best wishes go out to him in battling this most insidious of diseases.

I also included a crimped flower by Richard Fedderichi, but in this case it is special to me because he gave me the crimp from which it was made, so I not only have the weight, but the crimp that was used to make it. One of the joys of collecting is knowing the artists so well.

ANTIQUÉ EUROPEAN WEIGHTS

In this category, it is more difficult (and expensive) to come up with weights that are special. But I have put forth a few, among which is the Baccarat millefiori weight of Figure 12. Sometimes called a fireworks weight, the design was termed a “special pattern” by Hollister, and was peculiar to Baccarat; perhaps two or three are extant. Ample justification, I think, for including this weight as special. Another special French weight is the Clichy concentric piedouche of Figure 13. Many Clichy concentrics are special while many others are not, but this

one qualifies by virtue of the seven concentric rows of canes around the central rose, including 15 additional pink/green roses in one ring and 10 all white roses in another, and the marvelous workmanship. It would be special without the foot, and it has the foot to boot, with a green and white basket. .

AMERICAN ANTIQUES REVISITED

Because I wanted to finish with this weight, I postponed it when covering the American antiques. Certainly the Mt. Washington rose of Figure 14 is special, as all Mt. Washingtons are special, but this one is special amongst the special. In addition to being a perfect example of its type, it was the cover weight on the Sotheby's catalog when it first reached the market in June, 1988, and that sale set a record for Mt. Washington weights. Then it was the number one weight in Larry Selman's traveling museum collection, which took it as far as Scotland to be exhibited. This weight would be special in any collection.

CONCLUSION

Space in the handout did not allow inclusion of all the weights presented in the talk, so I have selected the "most special" and tried to relate why these are special weights. I can only hope for you that you have as much sheer joy out of forming your collection as I have had in forming mine, and that you are lucky enough to acquire many "special" weights along the way.

Jerry Gard, Los Altos, CA, April 24th, 2005



Figure 1. NEGC Open Concentric



Figure 2. NECG Posy



Figure 3. NEGC Posy on Aqua Ground



Figure 4. NEGC Upset Muslin



Figure 5. NEGC Garland [Fisher Collection]



Figure 6. NEGC Pom-Pom



Figure 7. NEGC Two-Rose Bouquet



Figure 8. NEGC Double Overlay [N-YHS]



Figure 9. Boston and Sandwich Flower with “B” Cane



Figure 10. Millville Lily [N-YHS]



Figure 11. Steve Lundberg's Monarch Butterflies



Figure 12. Baccarat Millefiori

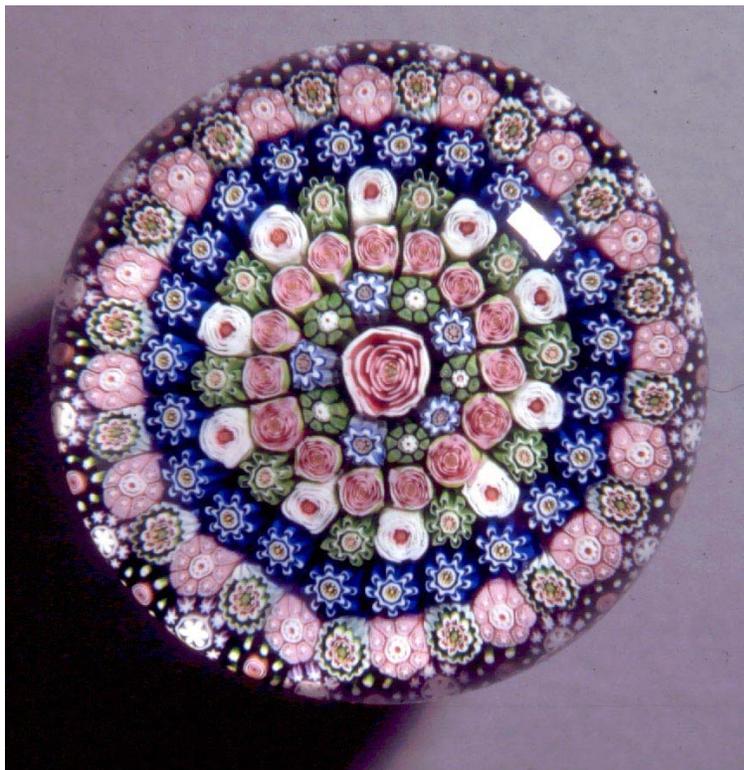


Figure 13. Clichy Piedouche



Figure 14. Mount Washington Rose

Addendum: The entire list of weights illustrated in the presentation follows:

1. 1973 Perthshire Close Pack millefiori–gift from wife Liz, October 25, 1973
- 2A. Dated 1848 Baccarat Close Pack like the Karl Sterne 1847, which sparked my interest
- 2B. Side view of the same weight showing a view through the single facet, or printy.
3. 1852 NEG open concentric on lat, used to solve the 1825/1852 date mystery, the upside down cane which was not the Sandwich founding date or anything else.
4. NEG concentric on cranberry filled latticinio, dated 1852
5. St. Louis pom pon on cranberry filled lat--they invented it and used it often for white pom pon
6. NEG cranberry spoke pattern mille, sharing many canes with #4, in Hollister, color Fig.89
7. NEG posy on cranberry with 1852 date cane–lampwork on cranberry lat with 1852 date cane!

STUDY OF THESE COLOR GROUNDS LED TO INTEREST IN OTHER NEG GROUNDS

8. NEG Posy on “Smoky Aqua” ground, very rare, beautiful, and a ring of large rabbits thrown in
9. NEG Star Garland on upset muslin, and Larry’s first book said they never used this ground.
10. NEG looped garland on muslin with central Eagle silhouette cane; canes look good on muslin
11. NEG Posy on upset muslin, which includes colored twists, as Baccarat, but not St. L did

NEW ENGLAND GLASS PAPERWEIGHT FORMS OF INTEREST

12. NEG true mushroom–unusual form– but NEG canes, so perhaps Gillinder at NEG
13. NEG crown–unusual in that there is only one type of twist–red/green–used.
14. NEG swirl–one of two known–both identical in coloring and with the same center cane
15. NEG Garland of fluted-petal flowers with a millefiori center cane, St. Louis style
- 16A. Pair of matching NEG flowers, one purple, one yellow, on lat–excellent color and quality
- 16B. NEG flower with upper row of petals from twists ala Debbie Tarsitano, only much sooner.
17. NEG fantastic pom pon center surrounded by rings of canes–French quality in design, skill
18. FIRST GREAT PAPERWEIGHT: NEG roses on lat from NYHS, 2 known, 2nd in BM Mus.
19. NEG magnum swag of flowers–most are well made and special–found in Madrid
- 20A. SECOND GREAT PPWT: NEG Double Overlay Upright Bouquet from NYHS collection
- 20B. Side view showing side view with overlay and fantastic cutting

SPECIAL WEIGHTS FROM BOSTON AND SANDWICH GLASS CO.

21. B & S “B” flower with white petals striped in pink and blue–with a white bud, on clear.
22. B&S posy with six canes representing flowers. Common from NEG, BS posies are very rare.

OTHER AMERICAN

23. Gillinder carpet of white canes with one eye catching red cane in the center.
24. “EB” signature weight, unusual for the outer row of “EB” canes, on in center, 30 in all.
25. Millville Sailboat–more a yacht–possibly by Micheal Kane, raising frit to an art form.
26. Millville Water Lily, crimped, from NYHS, 2nd is here in BM Museum–fantastic
27. Larsen Crimped Rose–from Melville: “I must have made a hundred roses. I wonder where they all got to.”
28. Frit “LIGHT FOR ALL” being a nice, arty polychrome frit with lovely detail.
29. Frit “LINCOLN’S HOME” showing misspelled “LINCON’S” in grass in foreground.

- 30. Frit “LINCOLN’S HOME” in polychrome, showing same misspelling in the grass.
- 31. Albert Graeser, Pittsburg, PA plaque weight “Edward E. Pelton, Co. K., 8th Regt. Conn. Vols
- 32. Copy of “Private Edward Pelton”, Civil War Service Record, deceased 1924, Connecticut

OLD CHINESE AND OTHER FOREIGN WEIGHTS

- 33. Chinese copy of an NEG cornflower on lat, shown with the original NEG cornflower.
- 34. Chinese plaque weights: Woman in Garden, and Li River Limestone Mts.
- 35A. Native American Sand Weights, 4 examples showing southwestern deserts, 2 shot glasses
- 35B. Native American Sand Weight in tumbler, showing detail of sand painting.
- 36. English Dumpy with clay pipe of clown encased, along with actual pipe, courtesy of WG

MODERN WEIGHTS

- 37. Paul Stankard, Mountain Laurel, the technical masterpiece of the 20th century
- 38. Danny Salazar’s First Snow in Kyoto, the artistic masterpiece of the 20th century
- 39A. Richard Fedderichi’s crimped flower showing nice coloration
- 39B. Fedderichi crimped flower with the crimp that made it. I have the flower and the crimp.
- 40. Randy Grubb cylinder of daisies, upright, 3D, with no laminations—solid glass thru and thru
- 41A. Victor Trabucco giant salamander super magnum weight with nice upright flower.
- 41B. Steve Lundberg Monarch Butterflies resting on eucalyptus leaves. Super!
- 41C. Loren Stump magnum weight loaded with portrait canes—a wonderful achievement.

ANTIQUÉ EUROPEAN WEIGHTS

- 42A. Bohemian mille on muslin with a translucent red overlay, nice Bohemian weight
- 42B. Bohemian overlay, side view showing unusual and wonderful art nouveau cutting.
- 43. St. Louis purple dahlia, which relies on alternate red and blue stripes to evoke bright purple.
- 44. St. Louis encased double overlay, green/white, upright bouquet, my grinding, Larry’s trip.
- 45. St. Louis bouquet—a bouquet by any factory is special—so much lampwork, so much art.
- 46. Baccarat bouquet, as in the st. Louis, great skill, captivating beauty, always a pleasing view.
- 47. Baccarat fireworks mille, a fantastic display, 3 or 4 extant, great depth is entrancing.
- 48. Baccarat Joan D’Arc sulphide, probably the most complex and beautiful sulphide ever made.
- 49. Clichy looped garland on muslin, a design meant for the circular ppwt shape, and perfect!
- 50. Clichy bouquet—a bouquet from any factory is special, so much to see and study.
- 51. Clichy star garland on a deep pink opaque color ground—no one did star garlands like Clichy.
- 52A. Clichy concentric piedouche, top view showing many roses, a “Wow” paperweight.
- 52B. Side view showing the foot, consisting of a blue and white basket.
- 53. Mt. Washington Rose—all Mt. Washington weights are special and this is a special Mt. Washington Rose. Cover weight on Sotheby’s catalog, then highest price at auction., this weight would be special in any collection.