
Now we have a long overdue reference book on American glass paperweights and their manufacture. So many people have been under the impression that beautiful paperweights are a thing of the past and that making them is a lost art. Others have the impression that fine paperweights are made only in Europe. How wrong can one be! Not only is it far from being lost but there are many very fine craftsmen right here in the United States today and they can make paperweights every bit as well as the Europeans.

Jean Sutherland Melvin, author, lecturer and collector, tells us this in her very educational and informative book. She is a graduate of the Edinboro Teachers College and is Supervisor of Art of the McGuffey Joint Schools, Washington County, Pennsylvania, and is most competent in educational communication. Her interest in American glass was stimulated by her attendance at the Symposia on Glass at the Corning Museum, Corning, New York.

In the first part of her book Mrs. Melvin gives a brief but thorough coverage of general information on the subject. This includes the composition of glass, a description of the tools used in the trade and then a most interesting step-by-step description in text and photographs of Mr. and Mrs. John Gentile making a weight. You can almost feel the heat of the furnace.

Even though I have had the pleasure of visiting the Gentiles several times at their factory just north of Morgantown, West Virginia, and watching them at work, the excellent details given by Mrs. Melvin prove there is far more to it than just meets the eye. As she points out, each batch of glass is different, due to slight variations in temperature, composition, etc., consequently each batch will work differently. The end result depends primarily on the skill of the worker. It is truly an art and the worker is an artist creating a thing of beauty.

Then there are twelve beautiful pages of pictures of excellent color and detail showing a few of the creations of each of the artisans mentioned in the following chapters.

These chapters are each devoted to a visit to different manufacturers throughout the United States. Mrs. Melvin’s literary skill takes the reader with her on the many thousands of miles she covered in compiling the information for her book. You have the feeling you are right beside her as she talks to these men and women, visits their
factories and examines their products. Having pictures of them and of their representative works adds to the realism.

Mrs. Melvin has a casual but thorough style. Her book is easy and informative reading, definitely not a dry documentary textbook that one might expect of such a specialized subject. She also has many fine pictures, most of which were taken by her husband.

The book, published by Thomas Nelson and Sons, is beautifully bound and of excellent quality. The protective dust cover will extend its life for many years.

The only criticism I can find is that I wish it had been available years ago. I am sure it will greatly stimulate a well deserved interest in American glass paperweights. It is definitely a "must" for the library of anyone interested in glass paperweights, student or collector, beginner or advanced, and I highly recommend it.

*Pittsburgh* Michael F. McNulty


The present book is a sequel to a former one, _The Toadstool Millionaires_, which described the origin, development and criticism of patent medicines in America since Colonial days to 1906 when the first Federal restraining statute, the Pure Food and Drugs Act, was enacted. "In these sixty years, in spite of more education and law, quackery is not dead." The overall annual quackery take exceeds the research total expended on disease. Laws have not been planned to do away with self-medication but to make it safe, to curb quackery. Acting on the law of 1906 various means have been used to combat this situation, such as those included in the laws of the Food and Drug Administration, the Post Office Department, the Federal Trade Commission, the American Medical Association, the National Better Business Bureau, and numerous books, magazines and newspaper articles on medical quackery, and many private organizations concerned with opposing quackery.

The author, James Harvey Young, is Professor of History at Emory University and has been a member of the National Advisory Food and Drug Council to the Food and Drug Administration. His experience in dealing with quackery in food and drug laws and research