

Northeast Ohio at Work — Under Glass

By Jack Sullivan

Special to the Ohio Swirl

Among the benefits of collecting advertising paperweights are the insights they give into the industrial and commercial past of a region and even of the United States as a whole. Here are paperweights from Cleveland and Northeast Ohio that hold the story of ten businesses, most of them now just memories.



Figure 1

Today several commutator manufacturing firms are listed for Cleveland, including one named The Cleveland Commutator Company, the name on the first weight shown here (Fig. 1). The world may know what a "commutator" is, but I did not until writing this article. It is an essential part of an electric motor insuring the content flow of electricity. This weight contains a small bubble in which two dice are evident. The text warns "don't gamble" when buying this essential part.

The National Vapor Stove & Mtg. Co. (Fig. 2) appears to have had a relatively short life span. Incorporated in 1889 in Cleveland, the plant moved to Lorain, Ohio, four years

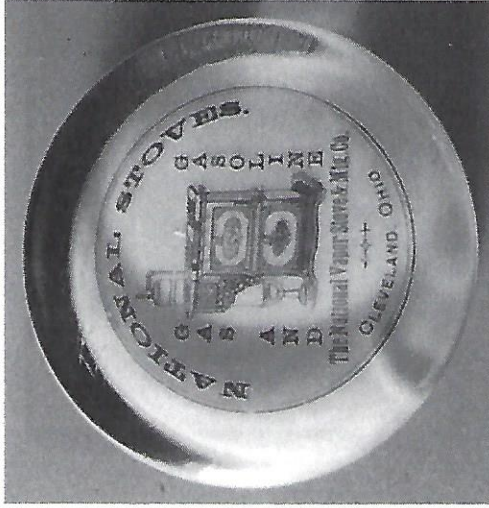


Figure 2

American Stove Company.

Abraham

Teachout, whose picture appears on a weight (Fig. 3), was known in Cleveland as one of its wealthiest businessmen and a close friend of John D. Rockefeller. He founded the A.

Teachout Company that manufactured doors, sashes and related construction materials. It was one of the first to ship lumber out of the South to urban centers north of the Ohio River. The firm, eventually headed by three generations of Teachouts, had its offices on Prospect Avenue in downtown Cleveland.

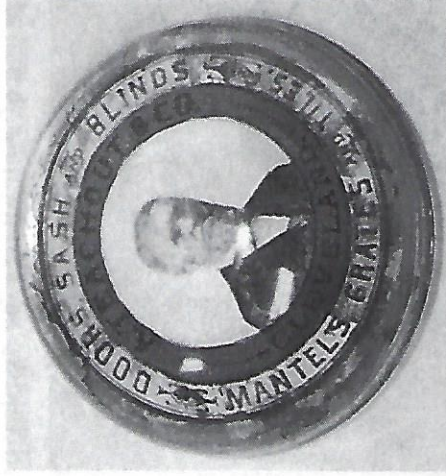


Figure 3

later, allowing a fairly precise dating for the paperweight. In 1895 the company was consolidated with the Moon Range Company of Columbus. That plant subsequently was taken over by the National Stove Company, part of a larger conglomerate known as the

The Ridge Manufacturing

Company, Cleveland, gave its customers a four-leaf clover on its weight (Fig. 4). The company manufactures a wide variety of metal racks and displays for retail

grocery, drug store and related uses. A

firm by that name exists today with a manufacturing facility in Batesburg-Leesville, South Carolina, producing a wide range of metal items for display purposes.



Figure 4

This paperweight with five dice (Fig. 5) was produced by a company founded by Messer Barker Beelman, a skilled carpenter and Civil War veteran who returned to civilian life in Northern Ohio to help found a firm in near his birthplace in the town of Plymouth. He called it the Plymouth Novelty Works. This company chiefly manufactured moldings and picture racks, but under "The Beelman Line" also made plate racks, medicine cabinets, magazine stands and other wooden items for the home. Beelman made his residence in Lakewood. He died there in 1922 at the age of 76.



Figure 5

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Figure 6

J. H. & D. Lake advertised their pulleys and couplings vigorously in trade publications. Their Massillon company featured "friction clutch pulleys," as shown on a well-designed weight (Fig. 6). They claimed that their clutch pulleys were the "...Simplest, strongest and best made. Adapted to light or heavy work, stopping and starting machines easily and quickly without jerking."



Figure 7

Timken Roller Bearing of Canton, founded in 1899, for well more than a century has been a major Ohio manufacturer.

The company makes a variety of friction managements and power transmission machinery for applications ranging from aircraft and automobiles to mining equipment and medical instruments. A paperweight (Fig. 7) is from an earlier era when founder Henry Timken patented a tapered roller bearing design that made life easier for mules hauling a wagon heavily laden with freight. Mule drivers must have appreciated it too.

Old-timers will remember the Cleveland News, a daily and Sunday newspaper published for 55 years until 1960 when it was

absorbed by a rival paper, The Cleveland Press. In 1905 an investment banker and commodity broker named Charles

Augustus Otis had merged three existing papers in a single

afternoon that became known as the Cleveland News. Geo. E. Harper, who issued a colorful paperweight (Fig. 8), likely was an executive at the paper.

The same old-timers will remember the Hollenden Hotel (Fig. 9) a luxury hostelry in downtown Cleveland that opened in 1885 and rapidly gained a reputation for hosting celebrities, including Albert Einstein in 1921. Five presidents — McKinley, Teddy Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson and Harding — stayed at the Hollenden.

A future President, John F. Kennedy, as a senator gave a speech there in 1960.

Two years later the Hollenden was demolished and the

Fifth Third Center building occupies the spot.

The motor car shown here on a weight (Fig. 10) was a forerunner of the modern ambulance. Ready to take a victim to a Cleveland hospital, George Sharer & Son also were undertakers and their "limousine invalid car" could also double as a hearse. Some have seen these dual purpose vehicles presenting a conflict of interest for their proprietors. Combination ambulances/hearses were banned by an Act of Congress in the 1940s.



Figure 9

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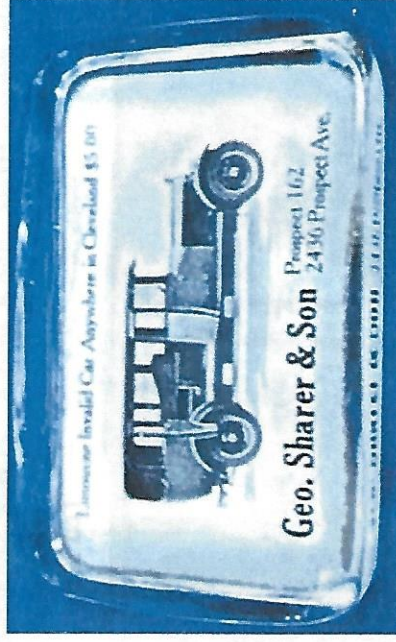


Figure 10

Paperweight Illustrations:

- Figure 1: Cleveland Commutator
- Figure 2: National Stove
- Figure 3: Teachout Company
- Figure 4: Ridge Manufacturing
- Figure 5: The Beelman Line
- Figure 6: Lake Pulleys
- Figure 7: Timken Roller Bearing
- Figure 8: Cleveland News
- Figure 9: Hollenden Hotel
- Figure 10: Geo. Sharer & Son