

Souvenirs of Cedar Point

By Jack Sullivan

Few if any of Ohio Bottle Club members will never have visited Cedar Point, the sandy peninsula that juts into Lake Erie between Cleveland and Toledo. My first visit was more than 60 years ago when the park was primarily a bathing resort with a few other forms of entertainment but did not emphasize the park's rides. In subsequent visits that did not emphasize the park's rides. In subsequent visits that emphatically has changed. Cedar Point is the most popular seasonal amusement park in the United States with an estimated 3.6 million visitors in 2016.

Opened not long after the Civil War, Cedar Point has generated roomfuls of souvenirs and collectibles. Among my favorites are the postcards that show mostly fully dressed adults, some wearing hats, standing on the beach (Fig. 1). The scene is enhanced by the presence of an early biplane, fixing it in time about 1910. Another postcard depicts an aerial view of Cedar Point, taken a few years later. The only ride in view is a swing at lakeside. (Fig. 2).



Figure 1

Glass paperweights were another popular Cedar Point souvenir. One depicted the Steamship R. B. Hayes, named after Rutherford B. Hayes, the 19th President of the United

States who hailed from nearby Fremont, Ohio (Fig. 3). This ship was used to ferry passengers from Sandusky, Ohio, where many arrived by train, to the resort. Eventually it was bought by the Cedar Point Steamship Company.

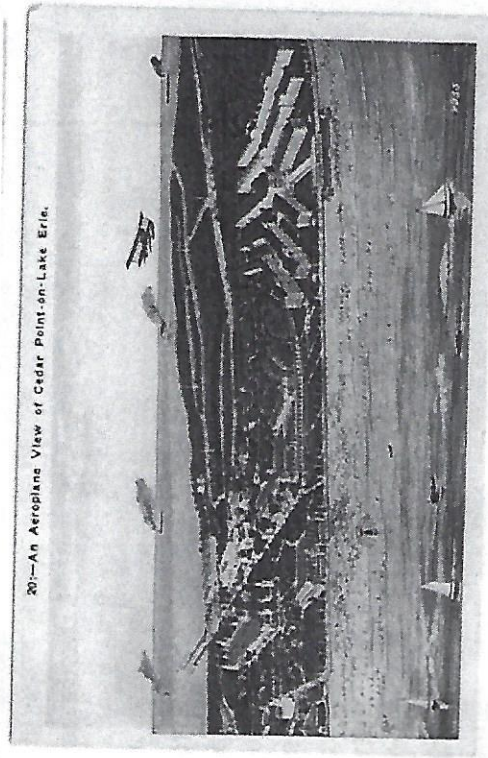


Figure 2

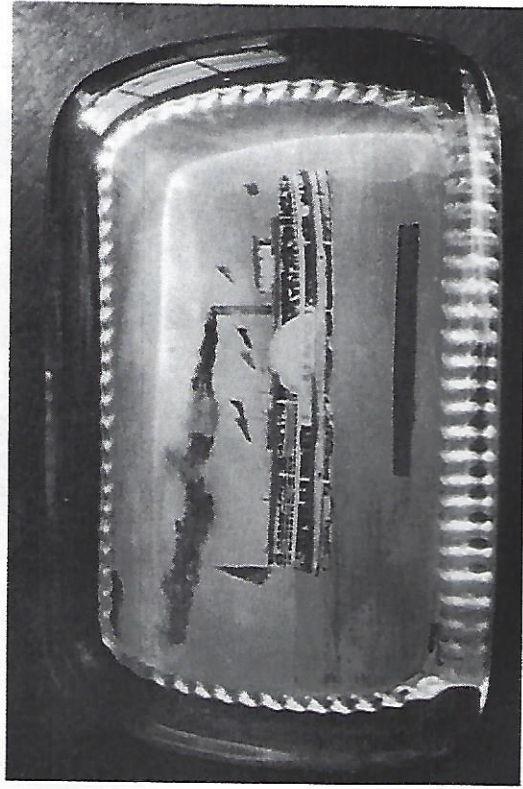


Figure 3

Another steamship with a Cedar Point destination was the A. Wehrle Jr., named for its owner. It appeared on two

paperweights (Figs. 4, 5). The ship originally was used to transport visitors among the Lake Erie Island but eventually was bought by Cedar Point and used to carry passengers from Cleveland to the resort. It made the news in July 1911 when another of the park's vessels struck the Wehrle while it was sitting at the dock in Sandusky. The reason for the accident, according to the press, was "a defective gong" on the striking ship.

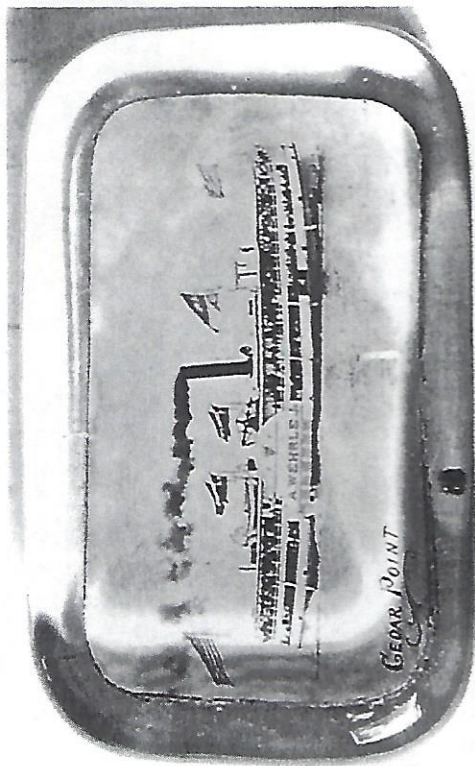


Figure 4

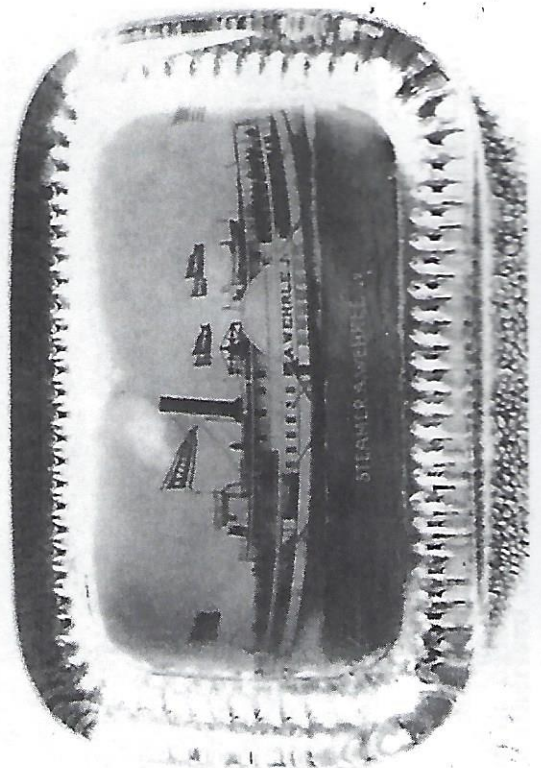


Figure 5

Other Cedar Point glass weights portray a contrasting picture. One from about 1950 of a lone sailboat (Fig. 6), seems to show an uncrowded "bounding main" scene, far from crowds. Another dating from the 1990s shows at least five of the resort's roller

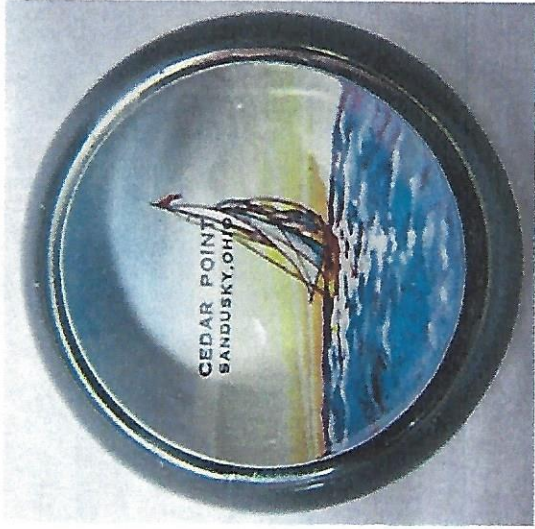


Figure 6

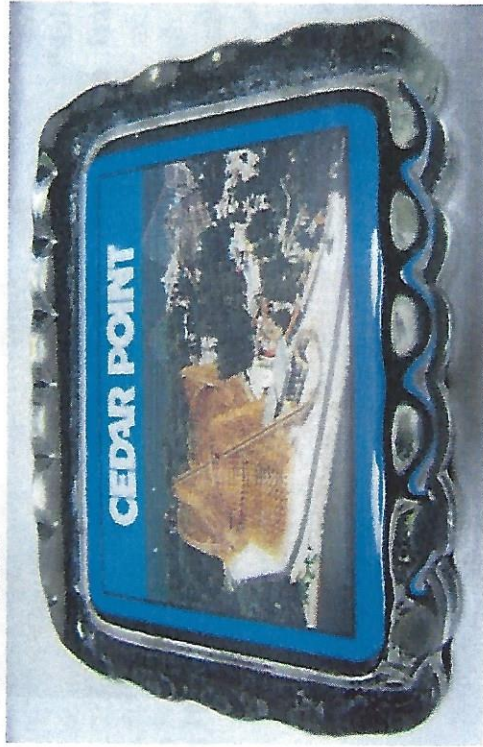


Figure 7

coasters, for which it has become famous worldwide (Fig. 7). The main structure visible likely is the "Blue Streak," erected in 1964 and touted as the largest wooden coaster in the U.S.

Today Cedar Point boasts 16 roller coasters and is the only amusement park in the world with five coasters taller than 200 feet. In recent years, snow globes, both in glass and plastic; have replaced paperweights as popular souvenirs. Most celebrate the coasters and mention one of the rides. Dubbing the resort, "Coaster Capital of the World," a globe advertises "Woodstock," a kiddly roller coaster for those too small for the other rides (Fig. 8).



Figure 8

Another snow globe celebrates the "Maverick" (Fig. 9). This steel coaster was opened in 2007. It is noted for its gut-wrenching 95 degree drop, the steepest of the 16. Another globe features the "Gatekeeper," a steel wing coaster that travels from the beach through the main gate (Fig. 10). Launched in 2013, it is the world's highest and longest wing coaster. Having avoided Cedar Point's roller coasters like the plague during my lifetime, however, I don't intend to start climbing on one now. Instead, look for me at the merry-go-round or better yet, checking out the items at a souvenir counter.

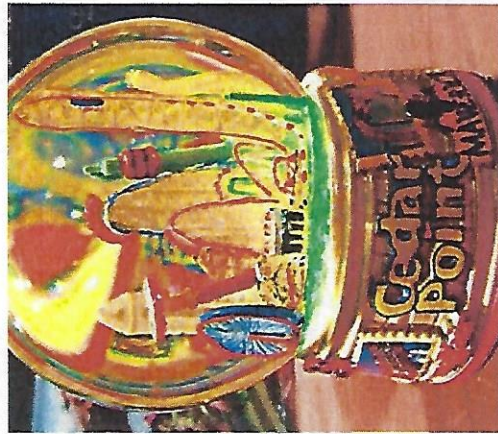


Figure 9

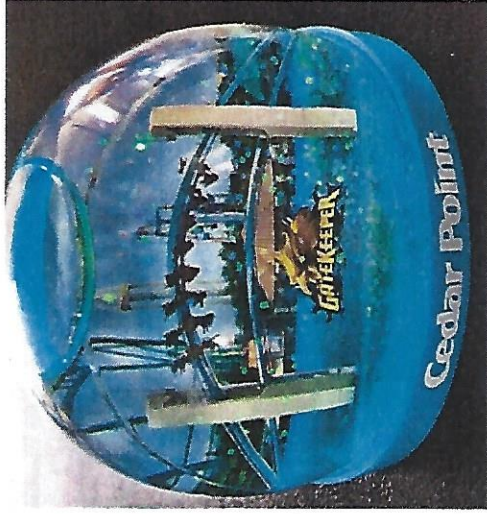


Figure 10

Illustrations:

- Fig. 1: Post Card: Bath house, etc.
- Fig. 2: Post Card: An Aeroplane View
- Fig. 3: Paperweight: RB Hayes ship
- Fig. 4: Paperweight: A. Wehrle Jr. ship #1
- Fig. 5: Paperweight: A. Wehrle Jr. ship #2
- Fig. 6: Paperweight: Sailboat on Lake Erie
- Fig. 7: Paperweight: Aerial view of resort
- Fig. 8: Snow globe: Coaster "Woodstock"
- Fig. 9: Snow globe: Coaster "Maverick"
- Fig. 10: Snow globe: Coaster "Gatekeeper"