

The Dictionary
of
Glass Paperweights,
an illustrated primer



Paul H. Dunlop.



Fig. 340. Bouquet on a translucent blue ground. John Parsley ca. 1995. 2 9/16" diameter.

Parsley, John John Boy Parsley was born on February 18, 1916, the middle of five children to Martin H. and Cora Gore Parsley, in Pilgrim, Kentucky, close to the West Virginia border. A house fire when he was young sent the family to live with grandparents, until he was five, at which time the family moved to West Virginia. John's dad died when he was 12, leaving his mom to raise five children.

After high school Parsley went to New York City where he earned degrees in Mathematics and Chemistry from NYU. While in New York he met and married his wife Anne who would be at his side for almost seventy years. They raised three children, John, a dentist, Betty Anne, an Appellate Court Justice, and Joane a

musician. Anne passed away in 2006, and John died on April 22, 2009.

John worked in research as a chemical engineer and had a consulting business. Jobs and business opportunities took him to Kentucky, Michigan, New York and finally to Pennsylvania with his young family. Flying was a necessary part of his job and John logged over 5,000 hours as a pilot.

Seeing the Howell family (*note: this is the same family who inspired Charles Kazium to blow glass*) demonstrate spun glass at the "Glass Blowers of the World" exhibit at the 1939 New York World's Fair was Parsley's introduction to glass. Soon after he began doing "Bohemian glass", making colored glass animals etc. as a hobby. On one of his business trips he happened on a collection of fine contemporary European paperweights in a shop, which was the start of his collection and his introduction to this art.

In 1980 he retired at 64, and having worked with glass for forty years, soon found himself working as a volunteer in the glass studio at Wheaton Village. It was here that he had his first opportunity to make a paperweight in the early 1980s, working with Gordon Smith, who became a close personal friend.

John specialized in making small weights with very finely crafted tiny bouquets with flowers and sometimes fruit. (*see Fig. 10*) These appear on a colored ground or on a very fine spiral filigree cushion. The weights may be faceted, and are signed with a P or JP cane and are etched on the side with his initials and a date. He calls his paperweight making years "a very happy part of my life".