



The mysterious

Clickit

Fountain Pen

by Mike Walker & Pete Sacopulos

IT IS THE UNUSUAL COLLAR OR KNUCKLE AT THE MIDPOINT OF the barrel that first catches the eye and causes one to ask “What is it?” When fountain pen collectors think of pens with collars or knuckles attached or incorporated into the barrel of the pen, Conklin’s famous crescent filler is probably the first model that comes to mind. Additional manufacturers that used such a barrel ring included Evans and even the flimsy crescent knock-off Spors. But this pen is none of these.

There is another fountain pen, the Clickit, produced by an unknown company (to us anyway), that utilizes a full collar, one that completely encircles the barrel, as part of a unique filling mechanism. The Clickit filling mechanism operates by turning the collar to the right. As this is done both prongs of a tweezer-like mechanism in the barrel are pressed together. This action forces the air out of the sac or bladder; then comes the distinctive “click”; the prongs are released; the “tweezers” spring open; and the pen draws ink.

There is yet one more unique aspect to the Clickit filling system. This is a “safety” feature to prevent the filling collar from accidentally turning and ejecting ink at an unwanted time. There are two separate designs for the safety feature that we have found. One design places two opposing notches on one edge of the collar and corresponding tabs on the edge of the lower barrel piece. This lower piece is spring loaded, so by pulling out on it the tabs disengage from the notches and the collar can be turned to fill the pen. When the barrel piece is released, the tabs slip back into the notches and the collar is locked in place. It is believed that this was probably the first design because this locking system makes filling the pen a two-handed operation—and not an easy one at that.





The second design was likely an effort to simplify the filling mechanism while retaining the ability to lock or secure the filling collar. The spring mechanism was replaced by a threaded button on the end of the barrel. Much like the design used in the Grieshaber "hump" filler, the button is loosened to allow the collar/filling mechanism to move or turn and tightened to secure the collar in place.

Inside the barrel, and joining the two barrel pieces and the collar, is a metal tube about 3.4 cm long. This tube is attached to the upper barrel piece, while the collar operates around the tube, and the lower barrel piece slides slightly up and down on the tube. This tube, therefore, holds the whole barrel together so the parts can function properly.

It appears the Clickits were made of rod stock colors and patterns commonly used by other manufacturers in the late 1920's and 1930's. Examples of Clickits have been found in pearl and black marble, green and black marble, gray pearl marble, red/burgundy marble and also in brown pearl marble.


Clickit pens appear to have been offered with both gold-filled and nickel trim. The pearl and black and burgundy marble models have gold filled trim while the green and black, gray pearl and brown pearl were offered with nickel trim. There appears to be no variation in the cap bands or clips. The bands are approximately a quarter-inch wide and have cut outs in the shape of diamonds and horizontal lines. The name "Clickit" is inscribed linearly on a generic clip. In fact, the same bands and clips can be found on some Keystone pens of the same era. The nibs, too, seem generic. Some Clickits are fitted with steel nibs and others with warranted 14K gold nibs. We believe Clickit did not

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Opposite page, top: Unlocked filling ring collar; left: Button-controlled filling collar Clickit. Center: A collection of Clickits. This page top: Clickit pen, cap posted.

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Will we survive? Or we become another casualty in a world where literacy and good penmanship no longer count? Will the PCA be relevant to a new generation of pen collectors? Or will it be a stodgy, obscure organization of limited value and interest? Will change and technology be the driving force behind a vibrant PCA that welcomes pen collectors of all ages and all interests? Or will new gadgets lure our young generation away from reading and writing? It all depends on us. It depends on what we value and whether or not we decide to get involved. Either way, the future is in our hands. 


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What do you think? Any ideas, hopes, dreams for the PCA? Drop me a note at wordherder62@gmail.com and we'll run selected letters from members in a future issue of The Pennant.

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manufacture its own nibs, nor did it have its nibs stamped with any logo or name.

The Clickit fountain pen has a pleasing streamline shape, with slightly tapered cap and barrel, similar to other streamline pens but with flat ends. The earlier notched collar version is 14 cm long and the threaded button version is 13 cm long. Additionally, the Clickit was offered with a shorter barrel. While the diameter of the shorter version was the same as the full size pen, it is more of a "junior" length. The diameter of each of these is about the size of a number 4 or 5 size standard fountain pen.

Finally, the authors have been generally stymied and unsuccessful in their efforts to uncover historic information regarding the Clickit fountain pen and its inventors. If other collectors have seen or have any information about the Clickit fountain pen and/or the manufacturer or inventor, or have Clickits in their collection in colors other than those identified in this article, the authors would welcome any additional information provided. 

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If you have a Clickit or information on the company or people who designed or manufactured it, we'd love to hear from you. Drop me an e-mail at wordherder62@gmail.com and tell us what you know. Mike and Pete would love to clear up some of the murkiness of this quirky pen from the golden era of fountain pen design and manufacturing.—Ed.



"Two Clickits, locking tab collar model (top) and button-controlled filling collar model (bottom)."

Remembering Dan McNamara

I am sad to report the loss of my friend and pen buddy Dan McNamara, who passed away after a long illness. I met Dan at the Boston Pen Show 20 or so years ago, and I was impressed by his display of "killer" pens (a word that Dan often used to



describe many of the items in his collections). They included a Waterman Tree Trunk pen and many other early fancy overlay and filigree pens.

But I was more impressed by Dan himself, and we became fast friends. On several occasions at the Brimfield Antique Market, and at antique shops in upstate New York and New England, dealers would look at me like I was crazy when I asked if they had any pens for sale. "Sure I do," they'd say, "but I'm saving them for Dan McNamara!" I'd just chuckle and walk on, knowing the dealers couldn't save them for a nicer guy.

Dan was well known to collectors, and he participated in many of the major pen shows throughout the country over the past twenty years. Although he loved early Waterman fountain pens, he had fine eye for quality within many areas of antiques and collectibles. He loved all of his collections, especially Tiffany lamps and antique glass paperweights.

He could find a treasure in places that no one else thought of looking. It was as if he had a built-in GPS that guided him and he would often be at a paperweight show one week and a pen show the next. He loved to travel and every day was an adventure for him.

Dan held a second-degree black belt in kempo style karate, and he modeled his life after the martial arts tenets of courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control and indomitable spirit. He delighted in telling me about a killer match he had with a kid a third his age or the new "killer" paperweight or pen he had just found, and most importantly, what was going on with his family. He held a degree in public health and was a registered sanitarian. He was retired from the City of Boston and had been the Principal Housing Inspector there. Dan lived to the fullest and his joy of life was infectious. He is survived by his wife Therese and daughter Teri.

—Paul Erano with added thoughts by Terry Mawhorter