

Salty Comments

No.45

Facts and Opinion about Open Salt Collecting

This is the second installment on non-lacy salts made by the Boston and Sandwich Glass Co. As we explained in the first part, the firm is famous for its lacy dishes but made other kinds of glass as well. This includes unstippled salts during the lacy era (1825-1850) and some made later before they closed in 1888. The first installment covered salts up to the year 1860.

After Deming Jarves left the firm in 1858, Sandwich tried mass production as a way to be profitable. There was less emphasis on quality, and more on competing with glass companies in the Pittsburgh area and beyond. These latter had an advantage in that their fuel supply - coal - was close at hand. Sandwich still used wood until the 1870's, but nearby forests were used up and they had to haul it farther and farther as the years went by. The railroads brought sand from a deposit in the Berkshires, which added freight costs. Evidently maintenance and morale at the factory went down when they cut corners to keep profitable. In 1882 a new superintendent changed the Company strategy, aiming for quality instead of quantity. He renovated the factory to improve worker morale, and switched the product line to hand blown and decorated tableware, lamp shades and globes. Their 1884 catalog shows this kind of glass almost exclusively.

By 1883 the Company employed 300 workers and had the highest dollar sales of any year yet. Things were going well until the glassworkers' union struck all eastern factories in October 1885, demanding higher wages and limits on production. The Pittsburgh and midwestern companies thrived during this shutdown, and their union locals sent funds to the east so the strike could continue. It was settled in December, but union agitation resumed within 2 years. They struck the midwest plants in November 1887. This time the factory owners said that a strike against one was a strike against all, so the eastern plants closed as well. Key union people got \$15 per week from the strike fund - close to what they would earn by working. This enabled the dispute to go on until May, 1888, when the midwest owners broke ranks and settled. The Board of Directors at Sandwich found they would be losing money if they reopened with the new wage scale. They decided to liquidate, and by July 1889 all assets had been sold. There were 3 attempts by small independent groups to make glass again at the Sandwich plant, but each lasted only a short time.

Sandwich made 119 different pressed glass patterns, according to Barlow & Kaiser. Not all of these had open salts, and many if not most were also made by other companies. Some may have used the original Sandwich molds which were sold when the Company closed. Since we don't know how to tell which dishes are original and which are "repros" (if you can call something made last century a "repro"), we have not listed any of them.. We have found 6 of the patterns made after 1860 which have open salts and are definitely identifiable as Sandwich, and listed them in this writeup. There may be other sets of their tableware which have salts we don't know about. There are also patterns that earlier authors attribute to Sandwich but Barlow & Kaiser do not confirm - we have omitted salts of these designs as well.

Two of the salts that Sandwich made are like ones made by many other glass companies. These are the faceted CINCINNATI type and the OCTAGON type. Digging at the old factory site uncovered examples which are pictured in the Barlow & Kaiser book. We can match each of the pictures to one of our salts, but we can't be sure that nobody else made one exactly like it.

Besides pressed glass, Sandwich made a variety of blown ware. In the 1860's they made mercury glass salts - a type we had not previously associated with them. These were made by blowing a double-wall dish, like a thermos bottle, and coating the interior with silver. Many years earlier a mixture of mercury, antimony and bismuth had been used for the coating, but it was abandoned because the new process gave a better product. The name "mercury glass" stuck throughout the years, however. Dishes made this way were also referred to as "poor man's silver".

Another blown type was "overshot" ware. To make this, the blower coated a bubble of hot glass with finely crushed glass particles. This was heated in the furnace to fuse the cold particles into the surface. A dish was then formed by hand working or by blowing into a mold and the rim was cut or ground flat after it cooled. There is a whole line of overshot glassware in the 1884 catalog. We have shown 3 shapes of salts in our illustrations. The square form often comes in a silver plated frame - we don't know whether frame manufacturers bought the glass from Sandwich and sold the finished piece or vice versa.

During the final years when blown ware was emphasized, Sandwich made several salts which surprised us. We had originally thought of the factory only as a glass pressing operation. The blown salts shown in the illustrations are small - it must have taken a great deal of skill to do the delicate work required. In addition, the smaller ones are engraved, which was another important part of the Sandwich operation that we didn't appreciate. The engraving was done by hand and could easily use any design, so we can't be sure that the patterns shown in Barlow & Kaiser are the only ones they made. The blown Gypsy Kettle salt was copied by Steuben, and bears the Steuben mark. We don't know of anyone reproducing the other two blown and engraved ones. Probably they have not been copied, since they are not widely recognized as Sandwich and are therefore not expensive.

We have listed many non-lacy salts that Sandwich made, but we doubt that the list is complete. Several years ago we attended an antique show where Ray Barlow had an exhibit of Sandwich glass. In it were a couple of collar base stackable salts (H&J 2512, Smith 3-4-2). These were made by many other companies, and we don't know how to tell Sandwich from the rest. Maybe he has the same problem. In any event, these salts are not mentioned in his book. There may be others that were omitted as well.

We have not discussed colored salts because we have no good information. Sandwich produced many lacy and non-lacy styles in color.. If you have one, you can figure its value at several times that of the crystal version.

The Boston and Sandwich Glass Co. was the first to become widely known among collectors. Because so much has been written about them and because so many people search for their products, real Sandwich glass commands a high price. This is why it is important to be sure of identification - you don't want to pay a Sandwich price for a salt that is not theirs. At the same time there are some shapes they made that few people know about. We hope that you can find a few of these in your collection already, or that you can get them at a bargain. And we hope that you will appreciate them more because you know their source.

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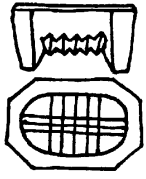
April 1994

References: "The Glass Industry in Sandwich", 4 books by Ray Barlow and Joan Kaiser
"Sandwich Glass", by Ruth Webb Lee
"An Encyclopedia of Pressed Glass in America", by John & Elizabeth Welker
"5000 Open Salts", by William Heacock & Patricia Johnson
A series of 10 books, "Open Salts Illustrated", by Alan B. and Helen B. Smith

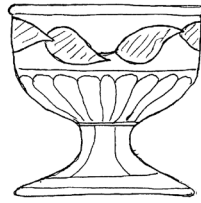
SOME LATER SANDWICH SALTS

Fig. No.	Approx. Years	Description	Approx. Size Ht. x Width	H&J No.	Smith No.
1	1850?-87	OCTAGON salt - individual size	7/8" x 2"	2940	10-3-2
2	1860's	FROSTED LEAF pattern	?		343-1-1
3	1860's	STAR AND PUNTY (OLD MOON & STAR) pattern	1-3/4 x 2	5012	16-2-1
4	1860-80	GREEK KEY (ROMAN KEY) pattern	3 x 2-3/4		343-5-1
5	1860-87	Mercury glass pedestal	2-1/4 x 2-3/4	4438	349-1-3
6	1860-87	Mercury glass simple bowl	2 x 3		
7	1865+	LINCOLN DRAPE pattern	2-3/4 x 3	3619	345-4-2
8	1865-80	MORNING GLORY pattern - individual size	3/4 x 2	3385	117-4-1
9	1865-87	CINCINNATI type	1 x 1-1/2	4477	104-2-3
10	1865-87	Cut glass bulbous pedestal	3 x 2		
11	1865-87	Metal handle double (Smith reference is only similar)	4 x 4-1/4	3814	143-3-3
12	1865-87	Post handle double	3-1/4 x 4-1/4		
13	1870's	Condiment set	?		
14	1870's	POWDER AND SHOT pattern	1-3/4 x 2-3/4	2986	299-3-2
15	1870-87	Blown individual, curl legs with fine ribbing	1 x 1-1/2		
16	1870-87	Blown individual, curl legs with larger ribbing	1 x 1-1/2	190	108-1-3
17	1870-87	Gypsy kettle (reference shows Steuben copy)	?		268-2-2
18	1870-87	Overshot glass dish - Oval	1-1/4 x 3		404-2-3
19	1870-87	Overshot glass dish - Round	1-1/4 x 2-3/4		307-1-2
20	1870-87	Overshot glass dish - Square	1-1/4 x 2	4215	130-6-3
21	1880-87	RIPPLE pattern	2-1/2 x 2-1/2		

SOME LATER SANDWICH SALTS



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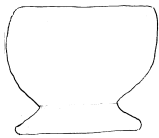
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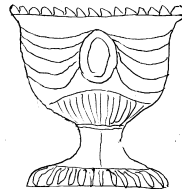
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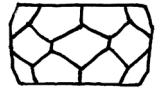
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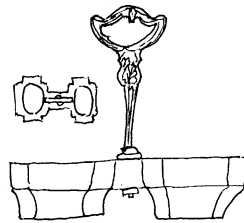
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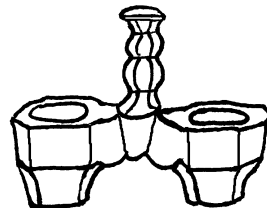
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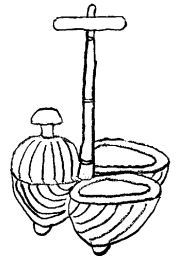
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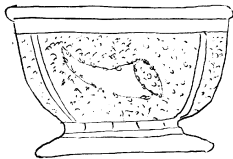
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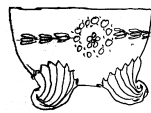
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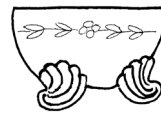
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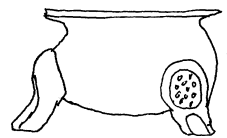
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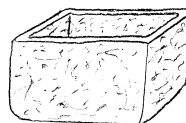
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NOTES ON LATER SANDWICH SALTS

- Fig. 1** - Many companies made the OCTAGON type, with only small differences from one firm to the next. A set of Sandwich ones has been found in an original box, so we know that this shape belongs on this list. We don't know how to distinguish them from those made by others.
- Fig. 2** - The FROSTED LEAF pattern was made only by Sandwich. It includes a pedestal master salt which is pictured in Welker's book. We saw one at a show before we knew who made it, and missed getting it because we hesitated over the price.
- Fig. 3** - The OLD MOON AND STAR pattern was called PUNTY AND STAR, according to the Sandwich museum. We have a flint and a non-flint version, and can't explain why they are different. One reference book says this pattern is "scarce enough to be welcome in most museums".
- Fig. 4** - The GREEK KEY salt is called ROMAN KEY by some books, and is often found with the design frosted.
- Fig. 5 & 6** - Mercury glass salts are hand made, so the shapes can vary from dish to dish. We don't know any way to tell which were made by Sandwich and which by some other company.
- Fig. 7** - The LINCOLN DRAPE pattern was made in both flint and non-flint versions, before and after the time when less-expensive soda-lime glass came into use.
- Fig. 8** - The MORNING GLORY pattern of tableware is scarce and expensive. The books list only the individual salt - not a master size - which surprised us.
- Fig. 9** - The CINCINNATI type salt is another one made by many companies. The Sandwich one appears slightly different from the rest, however. If you want to match it, see H&J #4477 - it looks exactly like the one in Barlow & Kaiser. We think the H&J one might be Sandwich.
- Fig. 10** - From its earliest days, Sandwich had a glass cutting operation. We have not read much about it, but Barlow & Kaiser show three cut pedestal salts with the general shape of this one.
- Fig. 11 & 12** - The lower part of these double salts match an original Sandwich wooden pattern. The bowls on the two are the same, though the drawings don't look that way. They were used with a variety of handle shapes over the years.
- Fig. 13** - This condiment set is shown in milk glass in the 1884 catalog. We may have seen it around in the past without giving it a second glance. We won't make that mistake in the future.
- Fig. 14** - The POWDER AND SHOT pattern is another that comes in both flint and non-flint glass. One book reports that shards of this design have been dug at the old Portland Glass plant, so it's possible that they made it too.
- Fig. 15 & 16** - We never realized these tiny blown and engraved salts were made by Sandwich until we read the book. Since they are hand made, they could be duplicated by another firm if there was a market for them.
- Fig. 17** - The dimensions of the hand-blown Gypsy Pot given in Barlow & Kaiser are unbelievably small - 1" diameter x 1-1/4" high. The Steuben copy is 2-1/4" across, which we think is the proper size.
- Fig. 18, 19 & 20** - Three shapes of overshot glass salts. The rims of the flat and oval ones are polished and decorated with gold. The round one has sawtooth cut on the rim, and also has gold trim. Since they were hand blown no expensive mold was required and it was easy to make a variety of shapes. We have the square one in a deep cranberry color, the only colored overshot salt we have ever seen.
- Fig 21** - RIPPLE was a late pattern attributed only to Sandwich. We seldom see any, so we think not much of it was made.

Sandwich Pattern Glass

The Barlow & Kaiser book lists over 100 different patterns they say were definitely made by the Boston and Sandwich Glass Co. Unfortunately most of them were also made by at least one other glass company, and the book does not let us know how to tell the difference. We have listed those patterns where we think an open salt exists, and have marked with an asterisk (*) the ones that we believe were made only by Sandwich. There may be other Sandwich patterns with open salts that we don't know, or copies by other companies that we have not heard about.

There are several salts attributed to Sandwich in H&J whose design we can't seem to match with the corresponding design shown in Barlow & Kaiser. We have not included these on the list.

Argus	Loop
Barberry	Loop & Dart
Beaded Acorn Medallion	Loop & Dart with Diamond Ornaments
Beaded Grape Medallion	Lyre
Beaded Mirror	*Morning Glory
Bellflower (single vine)	*New England Pineapple
*Bigler	Petal & Loop
Blackberry	*Powder & Shot
Bleeding Heart	Prism
Buckle	Prism & Diamond Point
Cabbage Rose	*Ribbed Ivy
*Cable	*Ripple
Diamond Point	Sandwich Loop
Early Moon & Star	Sawtooth
Fine Rib	Scalloped Lines
*Frosted Leaf	Stippled Band
Greek Key (Roman Key)	Strawberry
Hamilton (Cape Cod)	Sunk Diamond
Horn of Plenty	Tulip with Sawtooth
Huber	*Waffle
Leaf & Dart	Washington
*Lincoln Drape	