

SALTY COMMENTS #33
(Facts and Opinion on Open Salt Collecting)

One of the longer-lasting companies that started in the last century was King Glass. Their origin is not completely clear, but they were definitely in business as King, Son & Co. in 1869. They joined the U.S. Glass combine in 1891, and their factory operated until at least the 1930's. Along the way they acquired the Pittsburgh plant of McKee when the latter built a new factory in Jeannette, PA.

The founder of the Company was David C. King. He died in 1875, and his son, William C. King took over. The firm stayed in the family until the 1891 merger. The factory suffered at least two major fires, but rebuilt after each one, unlike many smaller and less financially stable outfits. The organization changed from a partnership to a corporation in 1888, and changed the name to the King Glass Co. When they merged with U.S. Glass, David King became the Secretary-Treasurer of the new organization.

From books and old catalogs we have been able to identify 27 open salts that King made before 1891. These are listed and illustrated on the following pages. About 10 of these are common shapes, made by many glass companies. Salts such as the plain square, plain oval, and diamond faceted (Cincinnati) were part of the line for most major tableware makers. Accordingly we can find a salt that looks like the King catalog illustration, but we can't be at all sure that it really is King glass. We found no indication that King made any of these common salts in color, however, so that any of these shapes not crystal must be by someone else. There are 17 designs that are definitely theirs, and we will comment on these.

Figure 1 - BANDED STAR - This design was patented in 1880, and was made in an extended table service with more than a dozen shapes. There are both individual and master salts. The individual size is attractive and quite scarce. The master size is genuinely rare - we know of only one in mint condition. We've wanted one for our collection several years, but have yet to find it. The feet on these dishes are quite vulnerable in the dishpan, so probably few have survived.

Figure 2 - BANDED BUCKLE - Shown in King catalogs as the UNION pattern, this footed master resembles the popular shapes of the pressed glass era. It is not a common design, but it is not really scarce.

Figure 3 - Gem Salt - A heavy oval dish with 5 "terraces" on the lower sides. Each band is divided into 12 panels. The more common salts with this overall shape have prisms where the "terraces" are. We believe this is a unique King design.

Figure 4 - GOTHIC - We have seen this salt only on the old catalog page along with 29 other pieces of tableware in the same pattern. Because the design is nothing extraordinary, we can't be sure whether we have ever seen one before. We'll be on the lookout from now on.

Figure 5 - HOPS BAND - Part of an extended table service, and called the MAPLE salt in the King catalogs. The pattern was patented in 1871, so it is earlier than most but not scarcer.

Figure 6 - BRILLIANT - H&J calls this the PANTAGRAPH BAND pattern, but we disagree with the attribution. The pattern glass books show PANTAGRAPH BAND goblets whose design is similar but not really close to King's BRILLIANT. The salt is shown specifically in several King catalogs.

Figure 7 - PICKET - From a set of tableware, originally called the LONDON pattern. The salt should have a toothed rim - the one shown in H&J evidently had its top ground to remove chips.

Figure 8 - Shell Salt - Look carefully at this one - it has different proportions from the more familiar colored shell salts. We have an individual like this and are now on the lookout for a master size.

Figures 9 & 26 -PITCAIRN and #137 - These are similar, but there is no mistaking that they are two different ones because they are shown on the same catalog page. The first of these has a single row of large prisms, above the diamond design; the other has one row above and another row below.

Figure 10 - FINE CUT AND BLOCK - This must have been very popular. The "toes" around the lower edge are easily damaged, yet there are many of these salts still available. We have seen them with the diamonds on the side flashed yellow, pink or blue, and the salt itself can be found in amber and blue. We also have the master size, flashed yellow.

Figure 11 - NOONDAY SUN - Not scarce, but hard to find in mint condition. The "teeth" around the bottom edge are often damaged.

Figure 12 - PRISM AND BLOCK BAND - Our pattern glass books prefer the name RING AND BLOCK for this design. The salt was part of a tableware set. The design was continued after U.S. Glass took over the operation.

Figure 13 - ADAMS - When the supplement to H&J was prepared in 1988, this salt could not be identified. We have since found a King catalog page showing tableware of this pattern, including the salt itself. The page showed no pattern name - just the designation "No. 29". The name ADAMS was given by Ruth Webb Lee in her books, since she guessed it came from that company. This salt is very scarce - we have seen it for sale only once or twice.

Figures 14 & 15 - BLEEDING HEART - This is a scarce pattern, which features the flowers which give it its name. The catalog page shows both the footed version and the oval version. Both are called salts, which answers our doubts about whether flat-bottom oval dishes were really meant for this purpose.

Figure 16 - ROYAL - We do not believe this was a tableware pattern, but rather a name that was given the salt on the catalog page for identification. It looks more attractive than its picture, because the prism sides are visible through the heavy rim.

Figure 27 - BLOCK - The block design such as is shown on this salt was used by many companies. We believe, however, that the BLOCK salt of this particular shape was made only by King. Our salt like this matches the catalog picture exactly.

We hope you will find it interesting to see how many King salts you have in your collection. Some that appear rather ordinary, like the Gem and the Royal, are really different than any made by other firms. You can also take a stab at matching your square, oval and faceted ones to the catalog pictures, but please don't ask us to guarantee that any of them were made by King & Co.

SALTS BY KING GLASS CO.

<u>Fig. No.</u>	<u>King No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Master/ Ind.</u>	<u>H&J NO.</u>	<u>Smith No.</u>	<u>Date</u>
1		BANDED STAR	I,M	2939	10-2-3	1880
2		BANDED BUCKLE (Union)	M			1875
3		Gem	M	3400	481-1-1	1875
4		GOTHIC	M			1875
5		HOPS BAND (Maple)	M	3587		1871
6		BRILLIANT (PANTAGRAPH BAND??)	I,M	2701	178-2-3	1875
7		PICKET (London) - Individual	I	2792*	10-3-1	1890?
		PICKET (London) - Master	M	3642	124-3-2	1890?
8		Shell Salt	I,M		15-1-2	1875
9	14	PITCAIRN (Jewel)	I,M	2554	29-4-3	1875
10	25	FINE CUT & BLOCK	I,M	512	53-3-3	1891
11	27	NOONDAY SUN	I,M	2591	22-1-1	1890
12	28	PRISM & BLOCK BAND (RING & BLOCK)	I	2935	85-5-3	1889?
13	29	ADAMS	I,M	5005	272-5-2	1890
14	85	BLEEDING HEART (Floral) - Oval	M			1875
15	85	BLEEDING HEART (Floral) - Footed	M			1875
16	97	Royal	I,M	2605	478-5-3	1875
17	98	Plain Square	I,M			1875
18	99	Plain Oval	I,M			1875
19	100	Plain Round	I			1875
20	101	Plain Footed	I,M	2968	467-4-1	1875
21	102	Prism - Individual	I	2692	6-3-2	1875
	102	Prism - Master	M	3681	123-4-2	1875
22	103	Diamond or Cincinnati	I,M			1875
23	104	Square Individual	I			1875
24	105	ARGUS	I	2613	21-3-3	1875
25	106	Pillar	M			1875
26	137	#137 Salt (shown with PITCAIRN)	I,M			1875
27	379	BLOCK (Cut Diamond)	I,M	2744	175-5-1	1890

* Salt pictured appears to have a ground rim, which is not original.

Notes: Popular pattern names are capitalized. The lower case names are what King called the dish.

Most dates are from patents or from the earliest catalog pages where the salt is shown. Those with ? are from other sources.

Master salts are not illustrated if they look just like the smaller one.

References:

"Open Salts Illustrated", a series of 10 books by Alan and Helen Smith

"5000 Open Salts" by Heacock and Johnson

"Pressed Glass in America" by John and Elizabeth Welker

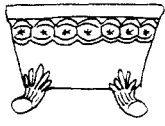
Notes from various glass journals collected by J. Stanley Brothers and filed in the Library at the Corning Museum of Glass

"American Pressed Glass and Figure Bottles" by Albert Christian Revi

"Early American Pressed Glass" by Ruth Webb Lee

"A Fourth Pitcher Book" by Minnie Watson Kamm

SALTS BY KING GLASS CO.



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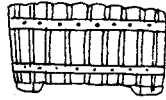
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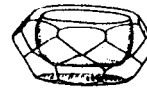
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