

Salty Comments

No.44

Facts and Opinion about Open Salt Collecting

Before starting on the current topic, I need to make a correction to the last issue. In studying the Gillinder Glass Co. of Philadelphia, I concluded that LIBERTY BELL was one of their patterns. Jane Shadel Spillman of the Corning Museum was kind enough to point out that Adams Company should be credited with it. James Gill, the patent holder, was a resident of Pittsburgh, where Adams was located, and has at least one other pattern assigned to them. In addition an old Trade Catalog has been found which states the pattern was made by Adams. So the Adams Co. write-up (Salty Comments #36) is correct, and I should not have mentioned LIBERTY BELL when reporting on Gillinder.

We often see salts at antique shows that are labeled “Sandwich”, seemingly to justify the high price they bear. We used to ask the dealer, “How do you tell it is Sandwich?”, but after a number of them reacted defensively we gave that up. There is no question that the Boston and Sandwich Glass Co. made a lot of open salts, since they were in business for over 60 years, but identifying which ones are really theirs has always been a problem. We recently purchased a book by Ray Barlow and Joan Kaiser that helps with this problem.

Ray Barlow became interested in the Boston and Sandwich Glass Co. in 1947 when he visited the site of the old factory for the first time. He and his wife found thousands of pieces of glass lying on the surface of the marsh near where the buildings had been located. They started visiting the place about once a week with buckets and shovels, and found quantities of glass shards and occasionally a whole piece. This was the beginning of a hobby that has lasted over 35 years. In that time he has dug tons of glass pieces, has bought shards that others collected earlier, and has even bought and sold land in the Town of Sandwich so that he could dig. The result is a collection of over 6 tons of fragments and an immense amount of knowledge about what Sandwich really made. About 10 years ago he began collaborating with Joan Kaiser to put his findings in print. They have published a set of 4 books on “The Glass Industry in Sandwich”. The most recent of these has just been issued and includes many open salts.

When we are asked who we believe about identifying Sandwich salts, we prefer the following in the order shown:

- An old 1884 Sandwich catalog which seems to show their entire line at the time.
- The Barlow and Kaiser books.
- The Welker book on Pressed Glass in America. These authors did an immense amount of research, and from what we have seen they took a conservative view in attributing glass sources. They looked for the old catalogs, and did not seem to accept hearsay evidence.
- Ruth Webb Lee’s book on Sandwich Glass. This was published in 1939, and is not completely accurate since new information has come to light since then.

In 1826, Deming Jarves started the first glass factory in Sandwich, MA. He had been manager at the New England Glass Co. until his father died, when he inherited a considerable estate. He first visited Pittsburgh to study the glass factories there, then bought land at Sandwich because it was close to water transportation and heavy timber for fuel. This was in the days before railroads, so water shipment was essential to economical operation. The factory was called the Sandwich Manufacturing Co. when it started

up on July 4, 1825. The following year he took several friends into the firm, and changed the name to Boston

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and Sandwich Glass Co. At that time they employed about 60-70 workers and turned out about 7000 pounds of handmade glass a week.

About 1827 the glass press was invented. When the idea was first tried and proved workable, Jarves received threats from the workmen, who recognized that it jeopardized their jobs. The idea caught on slowly, because early presses made a large number of rejects. The problems were gradually solved, and by 1830 the amount of pressed glass exceeded the blown. After that pressed glass dominated, because it greatly increased productivity. This meant that prices could be lower so more people could afford to buy glassware.

By 1854 the Boston and Sandwich Glass Co. employed over 500 workers and turned out 500,000 pounds of glassware a week. They had Company houses and a Company store in town, and were very paternalistic toward their employees. Many details of their operations have survived - the books referenced below give lots of information. Needless to say they must have turned out a tremendous number of salts. Not too many have survived, however, because of breakage over the many years that have elapsed.

In 1858, Deming Jarves left the Company, evidently because he and the Board of Directors did not agree on how to run the Company. One source says that the Board wanted to concentrate on high production at the expense of quality, and that he would not agree. He founded a new firm - the Cape Cod Glass Co. a short distance away. This was a small operation, employing about 50 workers. It lasted only 10 years. and shut down when Jarves died in 1869.

The Sandwich factory continued operations until 1887, when the American Flint Glass Workers Union called a national strike. Details of the confrontation between the Union and the glass companies are given in several books. The outcome was that Sandwich never re-opened, saying they could not meet Union demands and still compete with mid-western glass plants. The Boston and Sandwich Glass Co. formally went out of business in August 1888, and was liquidated within a year.

As we listed the Sandwich salts we decided to omit the lacy ones. These may be a topic for later, but so much has been published that identifying them has a low priority with us. In defining "lacy", we included any salt listed in the Neal book. Barlow and Kaiser show 32 of them. When we completed the list of non-lacies we found there were 40 salts on it. To give room for good coverage of these, we have decided to do the job in two installments - salts before 1860 and those after this date.

When the Sandwich factory started they produced only blown glass. The first salts were blown into a mold to apply a pattern to the glass, and were then worked by hand to give the tops their final shape. This contrasts with the pattern molding of Stiegel-type salts, where the entire dish was shaped after the pattern was applied to the glass bubble. There were two kinds of early blown ones - heavy-walled salts where the rim was ground after blowing and thinner salts where the top was reheated and then shaped. These latter are sometimes called "blown three-mold" salts, a term which has misled some to think it covers anything made in a three-part mold. Dishes of this type are expensive, but must be blown, not pressed, to fit the category. Some of these were shaped like hats, and some were pedestal versions which had the foot formed with the bowl in the blowing process. There were some copies made earlier this century that have a blow-molded bowl and a foot formed separately. We bought one of these to show the differences - it was advertised as a "fake" so the price was reasonable. These shapes are hand crafted, so there are small differences between salts. They were also made by other factories using slightly different patterns; it takes an expert to properly identify the Sandwich ones.

The first pressed glass salts were probably not lacies. The stippled surface characteristic of lacies was developed as a way to hide the defects on the glass surface, and the style became popular in its own right. The early non-lacy types are shown in the attached figures. They were all of flint glass, which contains lead and potash and is expensive. It was 1865 before a method of using the much cheaper soda-lime glass was developed. The early ones were master size. We don't think that individual sizes were sold before 1860, though Barlow & Kaiser give earlier dates. We don't know the sources of their information.

The first pattern glass Sandwich salts were made in the 1840's. To be accepted by collectors as true pattern glass, a dish must be part of a set of several pieces, all with the same design. If a design proved popular, other glass factories often copied it exactly or made similar types. This happened with the LOOP and FINE RIB patterns, and with the capstan type salts. Barlow & Kaiser tell how to differentiate the Sandwich capstan salts from their cousins, but do not help with the two patterns mentioned.

One way of identifying early Sandwich salts is to compare them with wooden patterns used to make the molds. A number of these patterns have survived, and are shown in the Barlow & Kaiser book.

We have not found any information about what happened to the Sandwich molds when the factory closed. We do not know of any being used by another glass company - perhaps they were sold for their scrap value. We are quite certain that none of them is in use today.

All genuine Sandwich salts made before 1860 are flint glass. The thinner ones should have a prolonged "ring" when tapped. If there is any doubt, compare the ring with a known flint piece that has a similar shape. We have found that if there is any doubt about the ring, it probably isn't flint. The sure way to tell is by Archimedes Principle. By weighing the salt underwater and in air, you can determine the specific gravity of the glass. Lead glass measures about 3.0 or higher. Soda-lime glass measures 2.4-2.6. We made a crude balance that does the job, and have had several surprises when we used it.

We hope you find that you have a few Sandwich salts in your collection that you didn't know about. If you don't find any, the next installment will probably reveal some.

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References:

- "The Glass Industry in Sandwich", vol. 1., 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
- "Pressed Glass Salt Dishes of the Lacy Period", by L.W. & D.B. Neal

PS - We are often asked where the books on open salts can be found. "5000 Open Salts" by Heacock & Johnson is out of print - talk with used book dealers. When last we heard, Smith books #1, 9 and 10 could be purchased from Mimi Rudnick, Box 25, Demarest, NJ 07627, phone (201) 768-2870. Prices were \$8 for book 1, \$20 for book 9, and \$22 for book 10. Add \$2 per book for shipping. Talk with used book dealers or try an ad in the Salt Exchange if you need other books in the series. To join this, send \$6.00 to Sandra Jzyk, R.R. #1, Box 34, Ticonderoga, NY 12883. The next issue will be out in the fall.

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Comments on Specific Salts

Fig. 1 - A typical heavy-walled salt blown into a mold, with the rim ground or cut to finish it. The New England Glass Co. also made these fan-end salts.

Fig. 2 & 3 - Salts blown into a mold with the rims finished on the glassworker's bench after blowing. Several companies made these shapes, but the patterns on the sides will let an expert identify the Sandwich ones.

Fig. 4 - An old Beehive salt - so-called because the heavy ribs resemble those on the Beehive sugar bowls made about the same time. These salts are sturdy, so a number have survived but are usually a little worse for the wear.

Fig. 5 - This matches a wooden Sandwich pattern exactly. Barlow & Kaiser say that other designs were also used on the rim.

Fig. 6 - A heavy salt, that we could not find in any of the books. It is nice clear glass, and shows that Sandwich knew how to make good product without resorting to stippling during the "lacy period".

Fig. 7 & 8 - These salts are flint glass with a reverse-waffle pattern on the bottom. They are flint glass, and ring nicely when tapped. Although they are listed as early ones by Barlow & Kaiser, they are lot thinner than other salt dishes of this period. A lot of them have survived, perhaps indicating that they were produced for many years. They are found in color, and are expensive, especially now that antique dealers have found they are Sandwich.

Fig. 9 - This looks like it might belong to a tableware set, but we have not found the design in any of the pattern glass books.

Fig. 10 - This is our own version of the BIGLER pattern, drawn from what other pieces of the set look like in the pattern glass books. The one that H&J says "might be BIGLER" just doesn't look right to us. If you have one like the picture, or have one that you are sure is BIGLER, we'd love to hear from you.

Fig. 11 - The WAFFLE pattern is flint and has a very nice ring. We have not heard of any other factories copying this design.

Fig. 12 & 13 - Legend has it that the CABLE pattern commemorated the laying of the Atlantic cable to England. Our encyclopedia says this was accomplished in 1858, while Barlow & Kaiser indicates the dates for the salts as 1850-65. Since they list other salts as 1855-, we figure that the pattern must predate the cable, or the story must be folklore. We believe the individual size of this set should be dated 1860 or later. Barlow & Kaiser does not give a separate date for it.

Fig. 14 - This LOOP pattern was imitated by other glass companies. We have one which is close but not exact, since the foot on ours has a slightly scalloped edge. Look carefully before deciding that your salt is really Sandwich.

Fig. 15 - This NEW ENGLAND PINEAPPLE pattern was not made by the New England Glass Co., in spite of its name. The old records do not show what Sandwich called it.

Fig. 16 - The Sandwich capstan type salt resembles the Imperial salt made by McKee but is clearly different. If yours matches the drawing, it is theirs. Many of these have survived, but are usually damaged in some way.

Fig. 17 - The FINE RIB pattern was also made by the New England Glass Co. and the Union Glass Co. The books do not tell how to distinguish one factory's production from the other. If you have one that is not flint glass, it is probably not Sandwich.

Fig. 18 - Another salt that looks like it might be a pattern but evidently is not. We're happy to find out where ours was made.

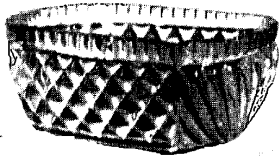
Fig. 19 - There is a cover that fits on this RIBBED IVY salt. Collectors who have a covered one say that ours is only the bottom part of the original. We prefer to think that it was sold both with and without a cover, and that we have a nice salt.

Fig. 20 - We have probably walked past this one a dozen times. Now that we know it is Sandwich we'll be more alert. Note that it is over 4" diameter, which is definitely master size.

SOME EARLY SANDWICH SALTS

<u>Fig. No.</u>	<u>Approx. Years</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Approx. Width x Height</u>	<u>H&J No.</u>	<u>Smith No.</u>
1	1825-30	Blown fan-end salt	3-1/2"x 2"	3653	340-4-2
2	1825-35	Blown footed salt	3"x 2-1/4"		
3	1825-35	Blown hat salt	2-1/2"x 2"		
4	1827-35	Beehive type (rectangular)	3"x 2"	3478	336-5-1
5	1828-40	Bulging sides rectangular	2"x 3"		
6	1828-40	Heavy ribs type	1-3/4"x 3-1/2"		
7	1840-50	Reverse-waffle bottomed oval	3-1/4" x 1"		
8	1840-50	Reverse-waffle bottomed rectangular	3-1/4" x 1"		206-2-2
9	1840-60	Hexagonal bowl pedestal with horizontal ovals	3" x 3"	3623	342-4-3
10	1850's	BIGLER pattern	?		
11	1850's	WAFFLE pattern	3-1/4" x 3-1/4"		344-1-3
12	1850?-65	CABLE pattern individual	2" x 3/4"	2520	8-2-1
13	1850-65	CABLE pattern master	3" x 3-1/4"		345-5-3
14	1850-70	LOOP pattern	3" x 2-3/4"		344-2-2
15	1850-70	NEW ENGLAND PINEAPPLE pattern	3" x 2-3/4"		
16	1850-75	Capstan type	3" x 2-1/2"	3631	408-1-1
17	1850-75	FINE RIB pattern	3" x 3"		
18	1850-75	Arch design on footed hexagonal bowl	3" x 2-1/2"	3606	342-1-3
19	1855-75	RIBBED IVY pattern (also known covered)	3" x 2-3/4"	4654	
20	1855-75	Round prism salt	4-1/4" x 1-3/4"		

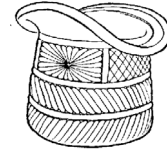
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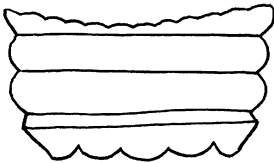
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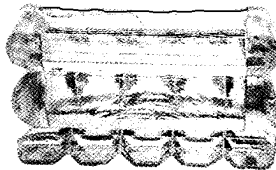
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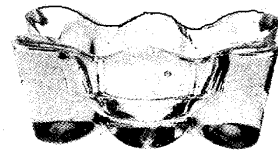
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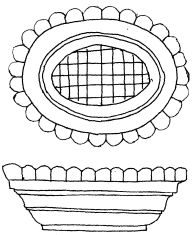
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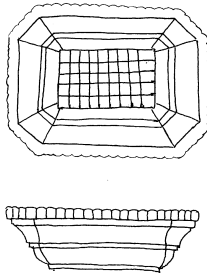
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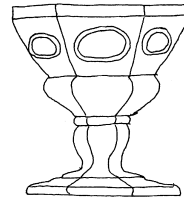
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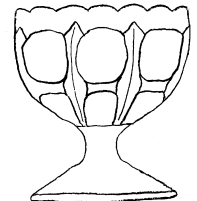
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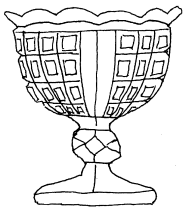
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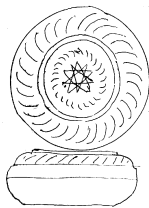
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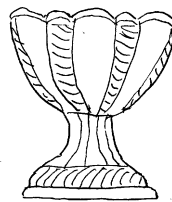
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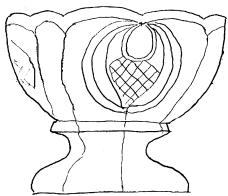
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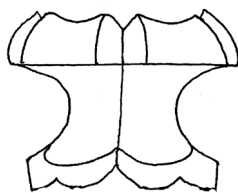
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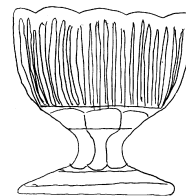
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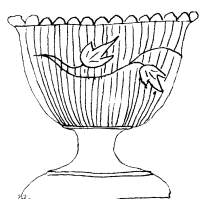
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