

SALTY COMMENTS #34
(Facts and Opinion on Open Salt Collecting)

In 1901, the National Glass Co. combine built a plant in Cambridge, OH, accepting the city's offer of a \$30,000 bonus and 10 acres of land. It was the only new plant they built during their short existence, and was relatively large and efficient. When National went into receivership in 1907, the factory was purchased by a local group and became the Cambridge Glass Co. As an independent company they operated for just over 50 years. They had many tableware lines, some of which were carry-overs from other firms in the National Glass trust. When they went out of business, most of their molds were sold to Imperial Glass. When Imperial closed its doors a few years ago, the molds were sold again, and many are still being used.

Cambridge made quite a few open salts, especially during their early years. We have seen pictures of about 50 different shapes. Some of these are so similar to those of other glass companies that we cannot be sure which is Cambridge. Most of the remainder are included in the attached list. The exception is the Cambridge swans - these we covered in Salty Comments #27, and will not repeat.

Our first surprise in researching the list of Cambridge salts was finding that most of them are in the salt books and in our collection. Because the company did not start until after the turn of the century, most of their salts are relatively available. The down side to this is that many of the molds have survived, and are being used today. We will cover this in more detail later. Our second surprise was that Cambridge had a cut glass operation. They evidently did high quality work, and produced several salts from their own blanks. Some of the designs were first pressed into the dish and then made deeper and sharper with a cutting wheel. At least one of ours looks like it was cut from a pressed blank, with no pattern in the dish before the cutter started his work. Two of our cut glass Cambridge dishes are shown in H&J on a "Pressed Glass" page - #2883 and 2884. There must have been two versions if the H&J listing is correct, but we have never seen the pressed ones. Another cut salt - H&J 3127 - was made from a molded pattern. The mold still exists, and the Summit Art Glass Co. in Ravenna, OH is making salts from it. They look very crude beside the cut version, but there is no mistaking the design.

A few of the Cambridge salts had their flat faces polished after pressing. Many glass companies did this to improve the appearance of their product. We don't consider this cut glass in true sense, since no real skill is required to do the operation. Some books list the polished face dishes along with the more elaborately cut glass, however.

Three patterns were transferred to Cambridge from other National plants that had been making them earlier. These are the ADA, DEEP FILE and JOSEPHINE'S FAN designs. If you have one of these salts, we know of no way to identify whether it is Cambridge or whether it came from the factory that originated it.

Two of the Cambridge designs were sold as children's dishes originally. These are the WHEAT SHEAF and the INVERTED STRAWBERRY patterns. They dishes are a perfect size for serving salt, but we can find no reference to their being sold for this purpose. We're still hoping to find an old catalog page that will call them "open salts" someday - they are too cute to be taken out of our collection.

One shape that we were happy to find was the "box-like" rectangular one with a starburst at the top of each side. We have one, but have always thought it was not a real open salt. What else it could be we couldn't imagine. It appears big as life in the Cambridge catalogs. Evidently people didn't think much of it at the time, and not many were made, because it's scarce. The only picture of it in the books is one that we contributed to Smith's Book 10.

Two of the Cambridge patterns have more than one shape of open salt. The MOUNT VERNON one has a low, flat-bottomed individual dish, and also a pedestal dish with Chippendale handles. The STRATFORD pattern has two pedestal dishes with Chippendale handles, but one has a toothed rim and the other a flat rim.

The Cambridge open salt molds have been dispersed since the Company went out of business. Mosser Glass acquired three that we know of - the Type III swan, the low oblong salt (H&J 434), and the hexagonal one with stars in the panels (H&J 439). These have been made both with and without the Mosser marks, in a wide variety of colors. The swan mold has changed enough to be identified as Mosser (see Salty Comments #27), but the other two have not. Most of the fire polished and colored dishes are not Cambridge, but there is no way to be sure.

The remaining molds that we know of went to Imperial Glass Co. They evidently had the right to continue the Cambridge mark (C in a triangle), because they produced some MOUNT VERNON salts like this. We have one with both the Cambridge mark on the bottom and an Imperial sticker on the inside. They also reissued the CAPRICE salt, unmarked at first as far as we know. It later was made with the Imperial mark in the center of the bowl. These are the only two that were made while the molds were in Imperial's hands, as far as we can determine.

When Imperial went bankrupt, their Cambridge molds went in several directions. Bob Wetzal got 3 of them - the double with the notch-handle tub bowls, the square one with zippered sides, and a plain rectangular one that is not included on the attached list. He made salts from each, all marked RW, although the mark is faint in some instances. When he abandoned pressed glass making, he sold his inventory and molds to E&E Collectibles. They still have them, but have not produced any salts with them at last report. They mark all their dishes, so they will should not be confused with the original Cambridge.

Summit Art Glass got 4 open salt molds from the Cambridge collection at Imperial. These are the STRATFORD, MOUNT VERNON and CAPRICE patterns, and the mold that made the blank for the buzz star cut salt. At first there was no way of telling their production from the original, except that they made all their dishes in color. A year or two after they started using them, they put a small dot in the center of the under side of each dish. If you know about it, the dot will identify the dish for you. If you don't, you could be misled. Summit also has several Cambridge nut cup molds that they are using. More detail on all of these are given in Salty Comments #15.

Boyd's Crystal Art Glass was the other firm to acquire Cambridge open salt molds. They have the Type I swan, the low MOUNT VERNON one, and the 8-sided tub with the u-shaped notches in the handles. Boyd is very good about marking all production, so if you look for their "B in a diamond" you cannot mistake it. Sometimes the mark can be faint, if the glass was a little cold or the presser was not pulling hard enough. We found one of their opalescent tubs for sale by a friend, with a very faint mark. She said it had come to her from England, and was distressed at the amount she had paid for it. Open salts do get around!

The attached table and illustrations tell you more about the Cambridge salts we have elected to list. The others we found are all common shapes shared by a number of glass companies. We hope you have fun identifying the Cambridge salts you already have in your collection, and will enjoy looking for the missing ones when you go hunting in the future.

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References:

- Old Cambridge Co. catalogs on microfiche at the Corning Museum
- "Pressed Glass in America" by John and Elizabeth Welker
- "5000 Open Salts" by William Heacock and Patricia Johnson
- A series of 10 books, "Open Salts Illustrated", by Alan and Helen Smith

SOME OPEN SALTS BY CAMBRIDGE GLASS CO.

Fig. Cambridge		Approx.	<u>Description</u>	Now Owned	H&J	Smith
<u>No.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Date</u>		<u>By*</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>No.</u>
1			Pedestal, 6-panelled bowl on hexagonal foot		421	57-4-2
2			Double, two 6-sided tubs with notch handles	E&E	797	52-3-1
3			Notch-handled 8-sided tub, with Round Dinnerware set	Boyd	2847	13-2-3
4			Small oval glass celery tray		831	262-1-2
5			Low oblong salt, 10 panels around oval bowl	Mosser	434	261-2-1
6			DECAGON pattern, small 10-sided pedestal salt		777	468-5-1
7		1906	STRATFORD pattern, either toothed or flat rim	Summit		80-5-1
8			MOUNT VERNON pattern, pedestal type	Summit	3555	40-5-3
9	1187		MOUNT VERNON pattern, flat bottom type	Boyd		29-4-1
10	1191		Pressed then cut, buzz stars and lines	Summit	3127	477-1-1
11	1193 1202		Round, cut glass, vines & flowers, 1-3/4" Same, 2" diameter		2814	29-1-3
12	1201		Cut glass, 6 slant sides, vines & flowers		2813	82-1-1
13	1239		Wide flange rim, sometimes in perforated plated holder		2578	3-1-2
14	1525		Square, zippered sides	E&E	2743	10-1-2
15	2502	1903	DEEP FILE pattern, originally Dalzell		2638	
16	2504	1903	JOSEPHINE'S FAN pattern, originally Robinson Glass		2532	198-5-1
17	2577	1903	ADA pattern, originally Ohio Flint Glass		2663	18-1-2
18	2615		Heavy oval table salt, diamonds under broad rim			405-5-2
19	2630	1905	COLONIAL salt, may not be part of pattern set		2962	17-3-3
20	2631	1906	MARJORIE pattern		2676	31-2-1
21	2660	1908	WHEAT SHEAF pattern, also sold as child's dish		2623	26-4-2
22	2870	1915	INVERTED STRAWBERRY pattern, also sold as child's dish		2647	20-4-3
23	2683		Rectangular "box", starburst at top of each side			480-2-2
24	2684		Cut glass, round, 2 rows of crosshatched buttons			470-1-1
25	2800		Tab handle 12-sided tub		2846	13-3-1
26	2908		CAPRICE pattern	Summit		
27	2933		Hexagonal salt, star impressed in each panel	Mosser	439	361-1-1

*Summit Art Glass Co., Boyd's Crystal Art Glass Co., Mosser Glass Co., or E&E Collectibles

