

## **“OLD SALTS” by Mr. & Mrs. Addison E. Coddington**

About 60 years ago, Mrs. Addison E. Coddington was an open salt collector living in Indianapolis, Indiana. Mr. Coddington worked in the canning industry. When he traveled he would visit antique shops looking for dishes for her collection. The antique dealers whom he saw regularly would be on the lookout and help get them for him. As a result of this activity and Mrs. Coddington’s hunting, the collection grew to well over 2500 different open salts.

Mr. Coddington had a hobby of photography. During the late 1930’s he and his wife decided it would be worthwhile to publish something showing many of their salts. At the time the only other book like this was Clark W. Brown’s *“Salt Dishes”*, issued in 1937. Using his own camera and darkroom, Mr. Coddington photographed and copied 54 groups of salt dishes, including about 100 lacies and 150 pattern glass ones. Over 400 are not shown in either the Smith or Heacock & Johnson books that most collectors use today. For this reason the Coddington book can be a valuable reference source for communication between open salt collectors interesting in glass masters.

After printing his photographs in 5” x 7” size, Mr. Coddington bound them in a small 3-ring binder with the printed title, *“OLD SALTS”*. He added an introduction and offered the book for sale for about \$10.00. About 100 copies were made, and he kept a record of where each one went. Unfortunately, this record has been lost.

We first encountered the book in the Toledo Public Library in 1984. It was in their special reference section, and we could only see it on the premises. We were excited to find it, but had no idea where we could get one for our library. Nothing more happened until the spring of 1997, when we found a copy in a used-book store in Corning, NY. The price was \$100, but we couldn’t turn it down. In the front of the book was the Coddington’s address, so on a hunch we wrote to see if we could make some kind of contact. The first letter was returned with the notation “Forwarding Request Expired”. We then wrote to Addison E. Coddington, Jr., who was listed in the Indianapolis phone book. We have since learned he is Mr. & Mrs. Coddington’s grandson. He referred our letter to his aunt, Martha Coddington, daughter and only surviving child of the authors. She very kindly wrote us a lengthy letter giving this history of her father’s publication. She also gave us permission to copy his work, with the understanding that copies would be sold to collectors for a nominal sum.

Given this permission, we have tried to find the best way to make copies of the book we bought. Our solution was to scan the pictures and enhance them with a computer. We then added information about many of the salts to make the book more useful. We identified the makers where we could and correlated the pictures of the salts with those shown in the most accepted current reference works—Smith, Heacock & Johnson, Neal and Barlow & Kaiser. The results of our efforts are attached. We hope they will be useful to many open salt collectors now and in the future, and that they will stimulate the currently limited interest in old glass masters. **Ed and Kay Berg**

## Notes About This Reissue

The salts in the original Coddington book are mostly clear glass. All were photographed on a black background, which is a good way to make the design of the salt show effectively. We have scanned the pictures into a computer, enlarged them from their original 5" x 7" size and enhanced them as much as we can to bring out the details. Even with this enhancement a few of the salts are hard or impossible to identify, since we have only a picture to work from. This is true even on the original pages of our copy. Most of the pictures are quite useful however.

We have done our best to find the corresponding salts in other reference books, but certainly must have missed a few. When you find one in Smith or H&J that we missed or find a reference that is incorrect, we would appreciate hearing about it so we can correct the masters for this reissue.

In some of the cross-references, especially for pattern glass, Heacock & Johnson or Smith show an individual size but not the master. We have cross-referenced to this smaller salt when we could not find the larger version. Sometimes we differ with these reference books as to pattern identification. We would be glad to give you our evidence if you think we are wrong in specific attributions.

Many patterns and shapes were made by more than one Company. This is particularly true of patterns that were carried over when a factory joined the U.S. Glass combine in 1891. We have not tried to list all of them. Our primary sources for the makers are Welker's *"Encyclopedia of Pressed Glass in America"* and Barlow & Kaiser's book on Sandwich Glass. A few times we have used information directly from old glass company catalogs, as published earlier in our Salty Comments newsletter. We have not accepted the attributions in Heacock & Johnson if we could not find confirmation for them.

Pattern names can be confusing. We have relied on Welker again, but leaned even more heavily on Molly McCain's *"Collector's Encyclopedia of Pattern Glass"*, which is the best book we know for pattern identification. We recognize that a pattern may have several names, most of which would be unfamiliar to the original maker. We have not attempted to list anything but the name we think is most commonly used today.

The first six pages are the only text in the original book. The information on them is probably what the Coddingtons were told by dealers when they bought the salts. The remaining pages are copies of the photographs that were included. The table facing each picture gives what information we have been able to find about each dish that is shown.

More information about these salts is bound to become available as knowledgeable collectors use this book. We would appreciate it if you would let us know of any new information you find so we can incorporate it in future editions of this book. **Ed & Kay**