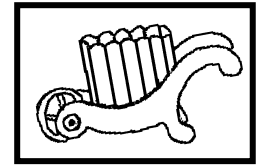


Salty Comments



Facts and Opinion about Open Salt Collecting

Number 79

June 2002

Co-Operative Flint Glass

Looking through the Corning Research Library microfiche files of old catalogs, we found a group of salts from one company we haven't yet covered. This was Co-Operative Flint Glass of Beaver Falls, PA. They were formed in February 1879 by a group of glass workers who were on strike from the McKee Company. The November 1878 strike affected all the Pittsburgh area pressed glass companies, so they figured they could compete by being their own management. The town gave them a 10-year lease on the land tax free, and \$25,000 working capital to start their enterprise. It was successful, and in 1888 the land was deeded over to the group. They had a major fire in 1889, which was not unusual in the glass industry, but rebuilt and were operating again by the end of the year. They incorporated in 1908, evidently ending the co-operative approach but not changing the name. They sold glass until 1937, when the depression forced them to close.

The catalog pages where we found salts were dated 1907 and 1921, and there was also a 1925 price list with 16 open salt entries. This latter page had many shakers mixed under the "Salts" heading – the company did not appreciate how special open salts were.

We also found pictures of a Salve Jar, made with a top to accommodate a silver cover. When the jar was empty, it could be used for serving salt, of course, though the lady of the house would have to go through quite a bit of salve to get a set of 12 for the Thanksgiving table.

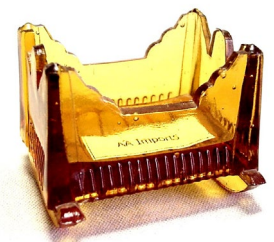
The salts on the catalog pages included quite a few familiar shapes, and some that we don't remember seeing before. The figural shapes included the old cradle, which was reproduced by A.A. Imports in the recent past. The best way to tell the old from the new in this case is to look at the height of the posts at the corners. On the old one, the ends are different heights; on the repro the heights are the same. A second figural shape is the anvil, thought to be a toothpick by some but clearly listed as a salt by the Company. Mosser has made copies of this one, and it is extremely hard to tell the old from the new. We have a marked Mosser one which we have been comparing with an amber one we believe is old. The major difference is that the horn on the unmarked one turns up a little at the end, while the marked Mosser one does not. Both salts look just like the catalog picture. We wish we had an authenticated Co-Op Flint salt to find out more.



Salve Jar



Cradle



Cradle Repro



Old Anvil?



Mosser & Old?

Another figural is the wood-grain tub. We think this mold has survived over the years because we bought a cobalt one made by the Wheaton Glass Co. in 1980 as a candle holder. It looks just like the old catalog picture, and Wheaton does have a supply of old molds, so this could be one of them.

The last one in the figural category is the basket double shown at the right. The old catalog clearly calls this the Basket Salt. The design has been copied by others – the most common copies are by Imperial who made it as a shaker holder. We have theirs in milk glass with two basket-weave shakers sitting in the two compartments. We think that Co-Op Flint also made shakers to fit in the two compartments. Several years ago we found a set at the Jones Museum resale shop. The shakers were made by blowing glass into a mold, and the design on the sides matches the basket holder exactly. They are rather crude, though. They fit in their compartments only one way – turn them 90 degrees and they won't go in. The catalogs we found had no reference to this adaptation, but we're calling them Co-Op Flint until proven wrong.

The Company made pattern glass too, like most others of that era. We only found two patterns with salts, however – their REGINA and their MAGNA. The first of these is quite cute, and we're pretty sure we've never seen it. The catalog shows engraving on the sides, and the shapes include sugar, creamer, molasses can, decanter and condiment set.. The MAGNA pattern shows a table salt, but the design is hard to figure out from the salt picture. The cracker jar shows it more clearly. Here again, we don't remember ever seeing one of these in real life, so if you find two, please keep us in mind.

The Co-Op catalog solves the mystery of the high-sided "Euchre" type. We have this 5-lobed one which is a big brother to the Westmoreland ones. It has a rayed bottom, however, not matching the diamond point bottoms that Westmoreland and Dalzell used.



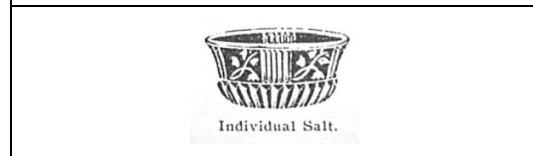
Wood Grain Tub



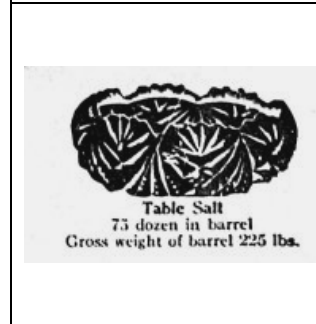
Basket Salt



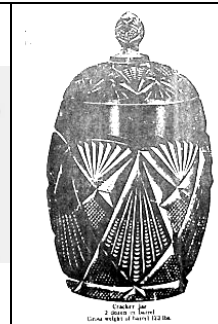
Shakers for Basket Salt



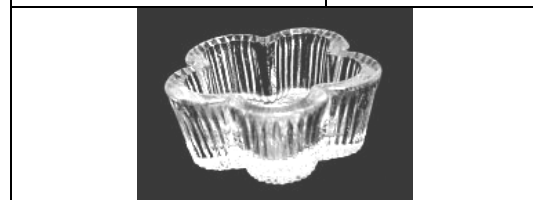
REGINA pattern salt



MAGNA Salt



Cracker Jar



Five-Lobed "Euchre"

(3)

It also pictures a 4-footed table salt with diamond point sides. This is the only place we've seen this design, so we're labeling our copy as Co-Op Flint. We have it in color, which is common for the late 1800's when amber, blue and vaseline versions of many salts were sold. The catalog also shows a shape that Summit is making today, possibly using the original mold. It has tiny thumbprints in two rows on the sides. Our copy is in vaseline green, which is not a 19th century color from what we have seen but not Summit's either. The shape matches the old catalog picture, anyway.

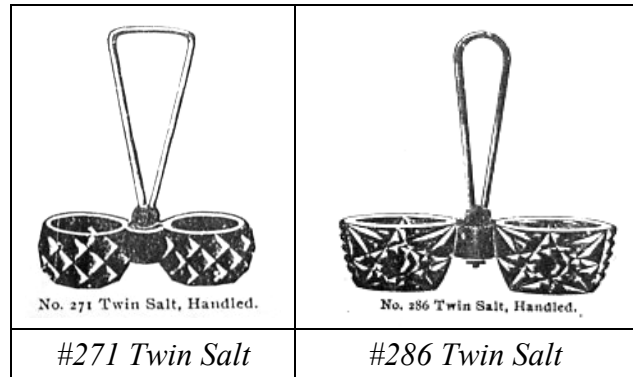
As with most companies of the early 1900's, Co-Op Flint made a number of common designs. We have no way of telling which are theirs, so the ones we have pictured may or may not be 100% accurate. The 4-legged Octagon was made by so many companies that we doubt any of them can be accurately identified. The same is true of the .ENGLISH HOBNAIL which is still in production today. There are small differences – Co-Op's had fans on the rim teeth and some others don't – but they aren't the only ones with this design feature. Their Square Diamond Individual salt is another design which was made by many companies. We don't think it will ever be possible to identify who made which one. The same goes for the oval and round glass salts with plain sides and rayed bottoms. We were surprised to find that we don't have either of these in the collection. The shapes are so common that the only one we have is the oval version which has tulips painted on it by some starving artist. We wish we knew whether or not the glass was made by Co-Op Flint.

Besides their Basket Double, Co-Op Flint made 4 doubles that were illustrated. The first, their #239, is a glass one with ribbed round bowls and a loop handle. This is very close to one made by Heisey. We tell the difference by the number of rays on the bottom of the bowls – Heisey's has 14 in each while this one has only 12. A second design has a post handle with prisms on the outside of round bowls. It is called their "Twin Table Salt", a sign that it was to be passed around, not just set in front of a single diner.

| | |
|---|--|
|  |  |
| <i>Diamond-Sided Table Salt</i> | <i>Tiny Thumbprints Salt</i> |
|  |  |
| <i>Octagon Salt</i> | <i>ENGLISH HOBNAIL</i> |
|  |  407—Round Salt Dip 300 dozen in barrel Gross weight of barrel 260 lbs. |
| <i>Square Diamond Individual</i> | <i>Round Salt Dip</i> |
|  408—Oval Salt Dip 300 dozen in barrel Gross weight of barrel 260 lbs. |  |
| <i>Oval Salt Dip</i> | <i>Oval Painted with Tulips</i> |
|  |  |
| <i>#239 Twin Salt</i> | <i>Twin Table Salt</i> |

(4)

. They show two other doubles, neither of which we have. We probably passed them up sometime, thinking they were too ordinary for our collection. Now we wish we had them. The first has faceted round bowls with a wire handle. We've seen the bowls without any handle, but don't remember seeing the complete unit. The second also has a wire handles, but the bowls have starbursts on them, a fancier design. We don't recall ever seeing one. The pictures show only the wire handle versions of these last two, but a later price list shows the same design with a "Post Handle" option. Wonder what they looked like – probably ones we passed up as "too ordinary" in the past, darn it.



It is worth noting that the salts shown above were in a 1907 catalog page, and all still appeared on a 1925 price list. This says that the molds were still in use well into the 20th century, and that they may still be around somewhere. When we compare this latter date with our birth days, the salts aren't really that old after all.

Changing the subject to relate an interesting item, we found a catalogue for an auction sale of glass to be held on Wednesday, July 13th at 9-1/2 o'clock. Its location is the New Granite Warehouse, 43 Summer St., Boston and it includes 700 packages of glassware. On the list are about 40 packages, each holding about 14 dozen Steamboat Salts, 5 packages of 10 to 27 dozen shell salts, and 7 packages of 9 to 19 dozen rope bottom, cone salts. These all were made by the Cape Cod Glass Works. We never appreciated that Cape Cod made any Steamboat salts – wonder what they look like. Unfortunately the catalog has no pictures. Also unfortunately, we missed the auction – it was held in 1859. We're looking around for a reliable time travel machine so we can go back and watch it.

We hope you have at least the more interesting Co-Operative Flint Glass salts in your collection, and possibly a variety of colors as well. The two pattern glass designs are not plentiful – keep your eyes open for them. If you ever get any information to distinguish between the firms making the more common designs, we'd appreciate hearing about it.

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Reference: "Encyclopedia of Pressed Glass in America", by John & Elizabeth Welker