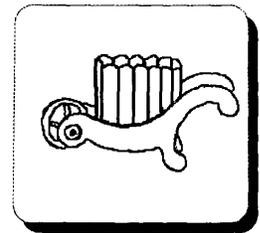




Salty Comments

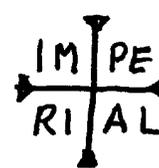
Facts and Opinion about Open Salt Collecting



No.51

The Imperial Glass Company was founded about the turn of the century in Bellaire, Ohio. They were thinking big - at the time the plant they built was the largest glass factory in the world under one roof. Production started in January 1904, and by 1911 shipped about 25 carloads of glass per week. Because they used hand pressing, they could not compete with machine made bottles and other high-volume items, so much of their line was tableware and other specialized items. During the depression they went through bankruptcy (1931), but reorganized and were able to stay in business. They bought molds from other glass companies who went out of business - Heisey in 1958 and Cambridge in 1960 - and ran some of them, creating a chance for confusion among Heisey and Cambridge collectors. In 1972, Imperial was purchased by the Lenox Corporation, who sold them to Arthur Lorsch - an investor - in 1982. They were losing money at this point. He was unable to improve the financial picture, so he sold to Robert Stahl who finally closed the plant in 1984. When the factory closed, the Heisey Collectors Club raised about \$200,000 and bought almost all of the Heisey molds to prevent confusing reproductions. The Cambridge and Imperial molds were sold to a number of other glassmaking firms.

During their 80 years of operation, Imperial used a number of different marks embossed on the glass they made. The reference books list 8 of them, but we have seen only 2 on open salts. The first is the cross with IM PE RI AL entwined in it. This appears in their FANCY COLONIAL salt (Figure 8), in the bottom of the bowl. The other is their IG monogram, which appears in some of the Cambridge CAPRICE pattern salts (Figure 16) which were made with the Cambridge molds, and on later runs of their #600 Table Salt (Figure 7, see below). There are two other marks that are not Imperial's which can be seen on their salts. The first is the Cambridge C in a triangle, which shows up in some salts they made with the MOUNT VERNON mold (Figure 20). We have one of these with the Cambridge mark and an Imperial sticker on it. The other is an MMA mark, put in the bottom of the bowl of the lacy salts they made for the Metropolitan Museum of Art at the request of the Museum.



The salts we were able to identify in our research are shown on page 3. There are not a great many of them, since production was started at a time when shakers were becoming common. The first 3, square or rectangular with a waffle or crosshatched bottom, are so much like those made by other companies that we cannot distinguish any identifying features from the pictures. We can match them, but we can also find pictures from other old catalogs that look just the same. Their price was interesting - they sold for 10¢ a dozen, but you had to buy a barrel full (1440 salts for \$12.00 - what a way to start a collection!). Figure 4, the heavy capstan type salt surprised us - we did not know that anyone made one of this type in this century. It is different from the ones made by Sandwich, Bakewell or McKee. There is none like it in our collection, but we are sure that we must have seen one and not paid any attention to it. Now we have to start looking closely at capstan salts. It will be interesting to see how long it will take to come across one. In Figure 5, we show what was done by putting a different cap ring on the salt mold. The resulting ink stand is just the same on the outside, but has a collar on the rim. We hope we can find out what the inside looks like some day.

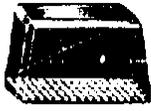
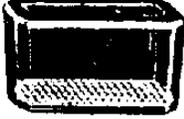
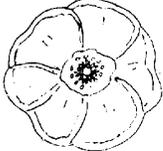
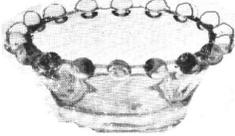
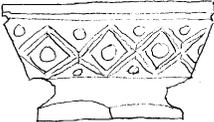
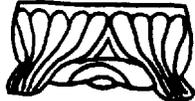
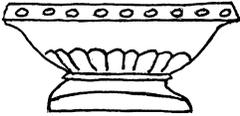
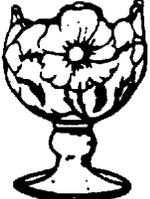
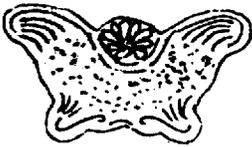
Figure 6 shows a rectangular basket-weave holder for 2 salt shakers. This looks just the same as the Co-Operative Flint Glass basket salt shown in the old catalog reprint (H&J p. 18). We haven't paid as much attention to these as we would like, so we're not sure whether there is a way to tell them apart. We do have a similar repro which has a smooth, folded handle, and no shakers. The Imperial mold is now being run by Summit Art Glass, and being sold as a basket salt.

Salts by Imperial Glass Company

| Fig. No. | Dates | Their No. | Description | Previous /Present Maker | Smith No. | H&J No. |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------|---|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 1909-24 | 13 | Indiv. Salt (square waffle bottom) | | | |
| 2 | 1909-24 | 14 | Indiv. Salt (rectangular, waffle bottom) | | | |
| 3 | 1909-24 | 214 | Table Salt (rectangular, waffle bottom) | | | |
| 4 | 1909-20 | 242 | Table Salt (heavy, capstan type) | | | |
| 5 | 1909-20 | 244 | Ink Stand (heavy, capstan type) | | | |
| 6 | 1909-23 | 428½ | Basket Caster (2 shakers in rectangular basket) | Cooperative Flint Glass? /Summit | | |
| 7 | 1924-69 | 600 SD6 | Table Salt (pedestal, ANAHEIM on bottom after 1969) | /Summit | 40-5-1 | 498 866 |
| 8 | 1925 | 582 | Handled Table Salt (FANCY COLONIAL pattern) | | | 2093 |
| 9 | 1943-49? | 5008 | Cathay Line Peach Blossom | | 55-2-2 | |
| 10 | 1943-49 | 400/19 | Candlewick Salt Dip (heavy balls) | /Boyd | 478-3-2 | 2643 |
| 11 | 1943-47 | 400/61 | Candlewick Salt Dip (small balls) | | 20-3-2 | 2642 |
| 12 | 1943-47 | 400/64 | Candlewick Nut, Sugar Dip (small balls) | /Boyd | 124-1-2 | 2641 |
| 13 | 1947 | 160-61 | CAPE COD Salt (pedestal version) | | 18-4-1 | 2948 |
| 14 | 1947-69 | 160/184 | CAPE COD Handled Nut or Mint | | 196/2-2 | 3456 |
| 15 | 1947 | 160/219 | CAPE COD Salt & Pepper | | | |
| 16 | 1965-8 | SD1 | CAPRICE Salt (Antique Blue) | Cambridge /Summit | 307-4-1 | 447 |
| 17 | 1965-8 | SD2 | Salt Dip (4-toed, amber, flared and unflared) | Cambridge /Summit | | 774 533 |
| 18 | 1965-8 | SD3 | Salt Dip (ruby, zippers) | /Summit | 21-2-3 | 296 |
| 19 | 1965-8 | SD4 | Salt Dip (verde green, pedestal with beaded rim) | /Boyd | 18-3-2 | 882 |
| 20 | 1965-8 | SD5 | Salt Dip (crystal, MOUNT VERNON pattern) | Cambridge /Summit | 80-5-3 | 3555 |
| 21 | ? | | AZALEA pedestal salt | /Summit | | 153 |
| 22 | 1980± | | Shell Lacy repro for Metropolitan Museum of Art | | | 3504 |

Notes: Present maker indicates who has the mold today. Summit = Summit Art Glass, Ravenna, Ohio; Boyd = Boyd Crystal Art Glass, Cambridge, Ohio
 Dates are what we found - there may be later or earlier production

Salts by Imperial Glass Company

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|  | 4" long  | 2-1/8" high  | 2-1/8" high  |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 2-5/8" wide  | 2-1/8" wide  | 2-1/8" diameter  | 2-3/4" diameter  |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 2-1/4" diameter  | 3" wide  |  | 2" diameter at top  |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 2-1/2" wide at handles  | 3" wide at handles  | 1-7/8" diameter  | 2-7/8" diameter  |
| 17a | 17b | 18 | 19 |
| 4-1/4" wide at handles  | about 2-1/2" high  | 3-1/4" long  | |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | |

The panelled pedestal salt (Figure 7) has an interesting history. It first appears as their #600 table salt in iridescent red (Rubigold) color in a 1910 catalog. In 1924, it is shown in crystal along with the other open salts they have. It next appears as a footed punch bowl in a child's toy set, according to Doris Lechler, an authority on children's dishes. In 1965, Imperial produced it in black, and sold it as a salt with their number SD6. In 1969, they made a set of souvenir pieces for a carnival glass collector's convention in California, and put their IG mark and ANAHEIM 1969 on the bottom. After they went out of business, Russel Vogelsong, owner of Summit Art Glass, bought the mold. He made some of them in cobalt, complete with the IG and ANAHEIM marks. Someone must have given him grief about this, because he added a V to the marks on the bottom of the foot, and all current production has this modified version. On some of his salts he has also ruffled the rim.



In the 1920's, Imperial made their FANCY COLONIAL salt (Figure 8), complete with the Chippendale handles that were popular with other factories. This was made in crystal, pink (called Rose Marie), and we have one in pink decorated with gold. This is an old design, and is not easy to find.

In Salty Comments 49, we described the peach blossom salt in Imperial's Cathay line. This looks like the frosted heavy Lalique glass, and is a cut above most of the pressed glass they produced. We show it again in Figure 9.

Imperial's CANDLEWICK line is the one most popular with collectors today. It features a ring of balls somewhere on the piece, which can confuse it with the ATLAS pattern. The open salts with the little balls on the rim are plentiful (Figure 11), as are the slightly larger nut dishes or strawberry dips (Figure 12). The salts come in two versions - 16 balls and 18 balls. If you have only one, count them, and then keep your eyes open for the other one if you want a complete set. It was also made with gold balls and with ruby flashing, two rare variations. The strawberry dip mold is now being used by Boyd Crystal Art Glass, but all their production has their mark on the bottom. We haven't seen any trace of the smaller open salt mold at glass factories we have visited.

There is a third and fourth open salt in this pattern which surprised us (Figure 10). We had been calling it the CANNONBALL pattern, maker unknown, but it shows up in the Imperial catalog as a CANDLEWICK salt mated with a pepper shaker. There are 2 versions of this as well - 9 balls and 11 balls. The catalog shows 9, but the mold that Boyd acquired from Imperial has 11. We don't know what happened to the 9-ball mold.

Another pattern popular with collectors is the CAPE COD. The open salt in this pattern is round with a 6-sided foot (Figure 13). There is a second open salt that is part of a set (Figure 15), which we discussed in Salty Comments 49. We have only seen this in the Imperial catalogs, never in real life. The third shape that appears in open salt collections is called a handled nut or mint (Figure 14), and is also shown as a holder for two shakers. It may appear as a salt in some part of their catalog that we haven't encountered yet.

The footed dishes shown in Figures 17a and b are made from one mold. The flared version is formed by opening up the mouth of the dish when it is still hot. Cambridge sold it originally as a nut cup, often with their C in a triangle mark on the bottom. As far as we can determine, Imperial only made the dish in amber in the years 1965-8, but they sold it as a salt. We found no record of any other production, but our sources are limited. Summit has the mold now, and they call the dishes salts.

The round zippered salt shown in Figure 18 is an original Imperial mold. It is a common shape, so there may be other companies who made one just like it. The one we have is crystal with a gold rim. About 1960, it was used in a line of "National Treasures" glassware that Imperial made for Sears. There were a number of old glass patterns in several shapes, including this salt. It was promoted with the actor Vincent Price as sponsor. The dishes were identified with the mark shown at the right, which combines an S for Sears with VPNT for Vincent Price National Treasures. It is on the bottom of the zipper salt, embossed so that you can read it when you look down into the bowl. In 1965, Imperial ran the mold without the marking as one of their SD salts, making it in a very attractive ruby red. The mold was subsequently purchased by Summit who made the salt in cobalt and other colors. A few years ago they added roses to the sides, so now there will be no more salts of the original shape made with it.



The pedestal salt with balls on the rim (Figure 19) is also an original Imperial mold, although we did not find any old catalog that shows it. We have it in crystal, and we know that they issued it in Verde Green (cloudy green) in 1965. Boyd has the mold now, and all production bears their mark.

The MOUNT VERNON salt (Figure 20) was mentioned above as having a Cambridge mark and an Imperial sticker. We don't know what the Cambridge collectors think, but they must not like the situation. The mold has gone to Summit, and their output is in color and unmarked. If you want to be sure of getting an Imperial salt in this pattern, you have to be lucky enough to find one with the sticker.

We did not find the AZALEA salt (Figure 21) in any old catalog, but we think that it is probably Imperial. We have seen it with vertical sides and also with the bowl flared, as was done with the Cambridge salt/nut in Figure 17. The one in our collection has the flared sides, and is covered with gold. We don't know what the gold was supposed to prove. The mold is now with Summit, and they are running it in a variety of colors.

The last salt, Figure 22, is the reproduction for the Metropolitan Museum mentioned above. We imagine that the mold for this is the Museum's property. They might have it run again, but there can be no confusion with the original old lacy salts because of the mark.

We hope that you have some of these Imperial Glass salts in your collection, and that you will have fun looking for more of them. If you ever find one of the CAPE COD salt & pepper sets shown in Figure 15, we'd like to hear about it. If you ever find two, please give us a chance to buy the second one.

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August 1995

Acknowledgement: Carol Van Norman from Swartz Creek, MI contacted Imperial in 1982 inquiring about open salts they had made. They responded with information about their SD series, and she graciously shared their letter with us. The information is incorporated into the writeup.

References: "Imperial Glass" by Margaret & Douglas Archer
 "Imperial Cape Cod", by Myna & Bob Garrison
 "Identifying Pattern Glass Reproductions", by Jenks, Luna & Reilly
 "5000 Open Salts Illustrated", by William Heacock & Patricia Johnson
 "Open Salts Illustrated", a series of 10 books by Alan B. and Helen B. Smith
 "An Encyclopedia of Pressed Glass in America", by John & Elizabeth Welker
 Microfiches of old Imperial tableware catalogs in the Corning Museum Library