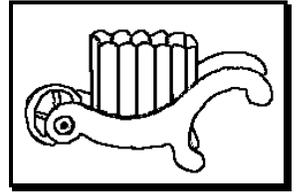


Salty Comments

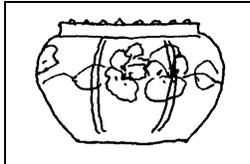
Facts and Opinion about Open Salt Collecting



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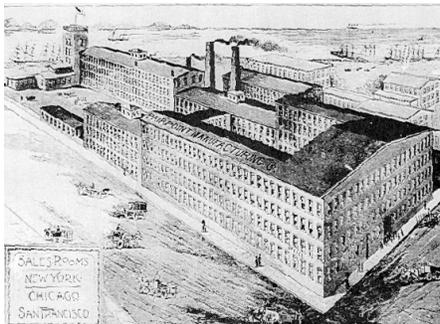
Mt. Washington - Pairpoint



Crown Milano Salt
Figure 1

When someone says "Mount Washington salts", we immediately think of the melon-rib Crown Milano one shown on the left. There are a lot of these around in both individual and master sizes. They are sought after by early glass and open salt collectors and bring prices of \$100 or more. We stop there however - we don't know of any others they made. The Mt. Washington Glass Co. and its successors went into business about 160 years ago - maybe they made some other open salts that might be in our collection. We didn't know of any, but the question demanded some research on the subject. The story led directly to the Pairpoint Company, so we have elected to cover both firms at one time.

The Mt. Washington Glass Co. was started in South Boston, MA in 1837 by Deming Jarves, the same man who began the Boston & Sandwich Glass Co. years earlier. He set it up as a business for his son, George, who ran it until he died in 1850. About 10 years later it closed, went through bankruptcy and was restarted by William Libbey and Timothy Howe. By 1870 the plant was in poor shape, so they bought a bankrupt glass factory in New Bedford, MA and moved the business there.



In 1880, the Pairpoint Mfg. Co. was formed to make German silver and plated Britannia metal products. The factory was built in New Bedford, right beside Mt. Washington, and became quite large - a view of it is shown at the left. In 1894 the two businesses merged, but the glass works continued to use the Mt. Washington name. At the turn of the century they reorganized and retained only the Pairpoint name. This continued until 1938, when the glassmaking part was sold to 3 former employees and became the Gunderson Glass Works. Operations in New Bedford were closed in 1952, and a new smaller operation started in E. Wareham, MA. This closed in 1958 because major repairs were

needed, and operations moved to Spain for 12 years. They returned in 1970 and built their present small plant in Sagamore, MA, continuing a business founded 160 years ago.



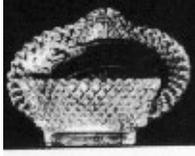
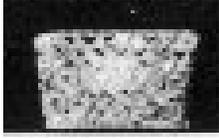
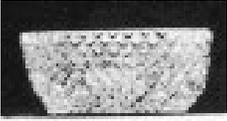
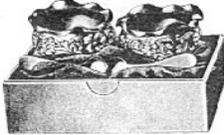
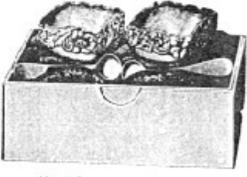
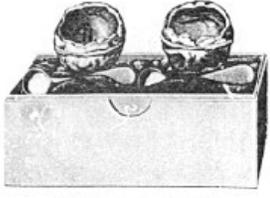
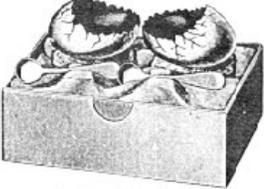
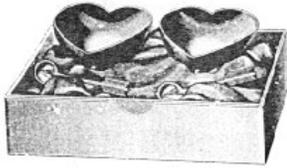
Smith Bros. Mark
Figure 2

The open salts like those pictured above are attributed to Mt. Washington but the decoration, which is a key part of them, was done by a separate firm, the Smith Brothers. They originally were under contract to Mt. Washington, but left to run their own business after their 3-year contract was up. Some of the Crown Milano salts have their lion mark on the bottom (Figure 2), which increases the market value substantially. A few of them have another, more unusual mark, shown in Figure 3. The books say that the salts with this "Libbey Toledo" mark were sold at the 1892 Columbian Exposition as souvenirs. What puzzles us is that the Libbey Glass Co. was operating at that time in Toledo, OH. Is it possible that they bought the glass from Mt. Washington, or did they merely copy the design and glass formula? Maybe what we call Mt. Washington salts might be Libbey after all. It's a mystery for investigation later.



Libbey Mark
Figure 3

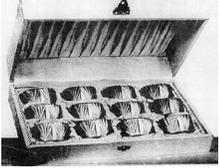
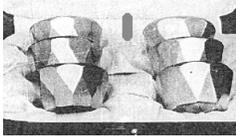
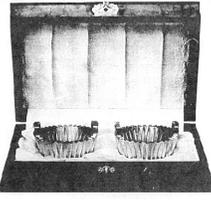
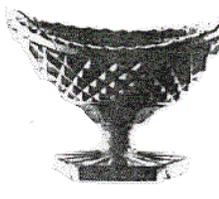
Mt. Washington is most famous for its Burmese and Peach Blow art glass, which is very collectible and very expensive. So far we have not heard of any open salts they made from these materials. A dig at the old factory site showed that they made at least 100 different patterns of pressed glass, and lots of blown and cut glass, but when we looked for information on Mt. Washington glass we found very little. The old factory site has since become a housing development, so further digging there is not possible. . All the patterns mentioned in the article about the dig are ones that someone else made as well, so there is no way to tell which is Mt. Washington and which is not. There was much copying of glass designs in the 1800's, so we may have a Mt. Washington piece and are attributing it to Sandwich or some other company.

		
<i>Cut Pedestal Figure 4</i>	<i>Cut Oval & Tray Figure 5</i>	<i>Block Cut Tub Figure 6</i>
		
<i>Cut, Collar Base Figure 7</i>	<i>Buttons Cutting Figure 8</i>	<i>Cane Cutting Figure 9</i>
		
<i>Diamond Cut.Oval Figure 10</i>	<i>Rect. Polished Figure 11</i>	<i>Ornate Round Figure 12</i>
		
<i>Ornate Square Figure 13</i>		<i>Walnut Shapes Figure 14</i>
		
<i>Egg Shape Salts Figure 15</i>		<i>Heart Shape Salts Figure 16</i>

We did find a copy of an old Mt. Washington catalog of the 1880's that shows an assortment of cut glass shapes including about 15 open salts. The pictures were very tiny so it is hard to be certain exactly what the patterns are. Some of the cut glass shapes are shown at the left. There is one pedestal, (Figure 4), two with their own little cut glass trays (like Figure 5), a tub shape (Figure 6), and several with round bowls and a collar base (Figure 7). It is hard to tell if the blanks were pressed or blown - we guess that at least the collar base and tub shape used pressed blanks. The cuttings all seem to be buttons (Figure 8), cane (Figure 9), or simple diamonds (Figure 10) - none of the fancier "brilliant" designs that are on larger pieces of that era. There was one unusual one in the lot - a rectangular shape with plain sides and what looks like a rope bottom (Figure 11). We feel certain that this is a pressed salt which has been polished

Pairpoint is a different story - we found several old catalogs in the microfiche file at Corning. At first they made only metal tableware, but after they merged with Mt. Washington the catalogs show some pressed and cut glass shapes as well. There are enough different silver plate designs that we will only show about half of them. Since the Pairpoint metal salts all seem to be marked, you can tell if you have any of them that we missed or omitted. We show all the glass ones we found.

The first Pairpoint catalog was dated 1893, soon after they were founded. All the open salts were in sets of two and were offered in silver or gold plate. The designs were ornate (Figure 12 and 13). They included a number of figurals like walnuts (Figure 14), eggshells (Figure 15) and hearts (Figure 16).

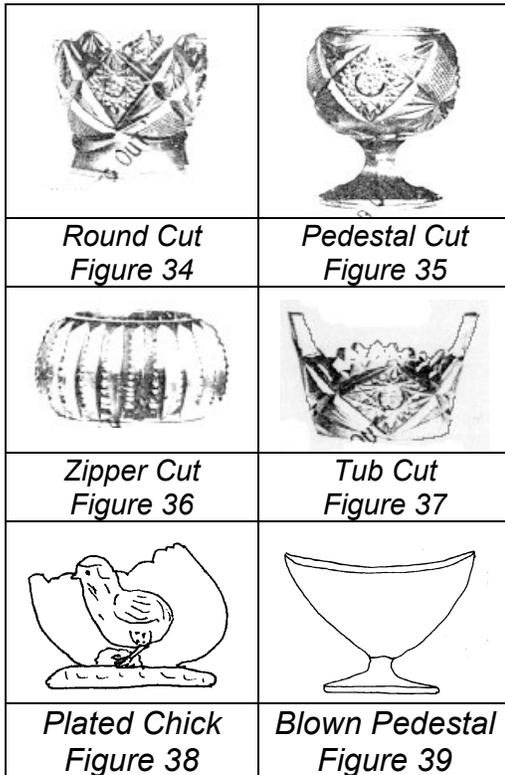
		
<i>Salt, 2 Shakers! Figure 17</i>	<i>Egg Pin Cushion Figure 18</i>	
		
<i>Breakfast Caster Figure 19</i>	<i>Breakfast Caster Figure 20</i>	<i>Drawer Caster Figure 21</i>
		
<i>Round Plated Figure 22</i>	<i>Pedestal Salt Figure 23</i>	<i>Footed Salt Figure 24</i>
		
<i>Footed Salt Figure 25</i>	<i>Condiment Set Figure 26</i>	<i>Set With Mustard Figure 27</i>
		
<i>Set, 2 Shakers! Figure 28</i>	<i>Oval Cut Set Figure 29</i>	<i>Faceted Set Figure 30</i>
		
<i>Cut Tubs Figure 31</i>	<i>Diamond Cut Figure 32</i>	<i>Pairpoint Mark Figure 33</i>

There was one curious set - two shakers and an open salt on a tray (Figure 17). Its caption mentions that it comes "complete with spoon for salt", so there is no question what the open dish is for. There is no hint as to why the second shaker. Maybe they wanted to serve the salt both ways, so that the open one could be used for dipping vegetables. As a sidelight, another page of the catalog shows the eggshell open salt filled with cloth stuffing and advertised as a pin cushion (Figure 18).

The next Pairpoint catalog was estimated as 1910-30, there being no date on it. This shows several caster sets, complete with pepper shaker, butter pat and napkin ring (Figure 19 and 20) One of these was particularly interesting in that the salt was held in a drawer which opened out from the base. (Figure 21).

The designs of the separate salts were much less ornate (Figures 22 to 25), and single dishes were offered more often than sets of two. There were condiment sets with a mustard (Figure 26 and 27), and another tray with two shakers and a salt complete with spoon (Figure 28). Though they were merged with Mt. Washington at the time, this catalog did not show any glassware.

The next catalog was 1920-30. By this time the metal open salts had disappeared and there were almost exclusively boxed presentation sets. These look like they were cut on pressed blanks, and included oval shapes (Figure 29), faceted ones (Figure 30), and a pair of tub shapes (Figure 31). There was one salt offered which was not part of a set - a cut glass pedestal (Figure 32). We have one of these, and have seen others for sale in the past. It has a six-sided foot with an 18-point star cut into the bottom. It is unmarked but probably originally had a paper label with the Pairpoint mark (Figure 33), which is still in use today. We thought it might be modern Waterford until we found this catalog picture.

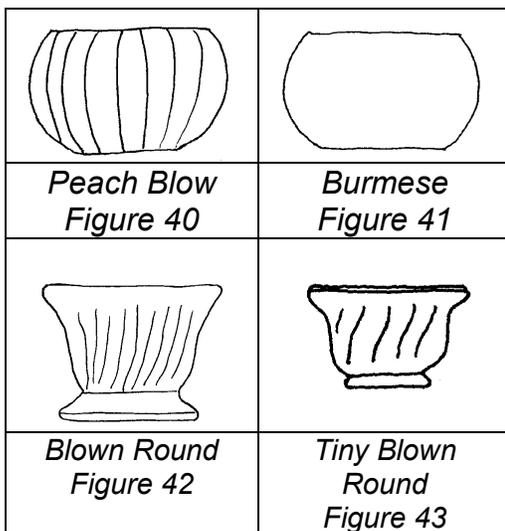


The last catalog we found was 1930-39, and it offered only 4 cut glass salts, shown in Figures 34 to 37. The metal-working part of the Company did not survive the depression of 1929, though the glassmaking portion continued. The letters on the salt in Figure 34 are part of the words "Closed Out", which had been stamped on the catalog picture.

There are 2 Pairpoint salts that were not in the catalogs but we want to include. The first is a silver-plated chick beside an eggshell with the New Bedford factory mark on the bottom (Figure 38). It is too cute not to mention. The second is a master size glass boat-shape bowl with a round foot (Figure 39). This is hand made, not pressed, and comes in several different colors. We have no way of telling when it was made, but we saw it identified as Pairpoint in the New Bedford museum so we are reasonably sure of our attribution. We have one of these with engraving on the sides and foot which is very attractive.

The current Pairpoint factory in Sagamore, MA turns out both pressed and freehand glass shapes. They made the Sandwich boat salt for the Sandwich Museum gift shop (Salty Comments #19) and 3 pressed salts using old molds (Salty Comments #24). In addition they reproduced the Peach Blow and Burmese glass that was originated by Mt. Washington. We have two salts of this material (Figures 40 and 41). The glass is not frosted like the original and both are about 2" diameter with pontil marks on the bottom. The ribbed one is the Peach Blow, shading from white underneath to dusky rose at the top. We have seen one of these with a matching small cream pitcher for sale at an antique shop. They also made a blue freehand pattern-molded salt for the Sandwich Museum Gift Shop, and a tiny one (7/8" high) for the New England club to sell (Figures 42 and 43).

As a related issue, Sandra Jzyk reports that the Sandwich Museum has sent their boat salt mold to Fenton to get some more made. If you visit the Museum gift shop in the near future, you might inquire how it is coming. If they have more of these boats for sale in the near future, there are a number of collectors who would like to get one.



Maybe we will find out more in the future, especially on the early Mt. Washington Company production and the source of the Crown Milano salts marked Libbey. In the meantime, we hope that you are lucky enough to have some of the salts we have mentioned in your collection already.

Ed Berg
401 Nottingham Rd., Newark DE 19711

February 1997

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