

SALTY COMMENTS #13
(Facts and Opinion on Open Salt Collecting)

One year ago this February one of the oldest operating glass factories in the country ceased operations. The Fostoria Glass Company of Moundsville, West Virginia was at one time the largest maker of handmade glassware in the United States, employing about 1000 people. Lately they had been struggling because their plant was old and outmoded. In 1982 they gave up all hand blowing and pressing operations and laid off about 200 people. This left only automated operations, and a work force of about 225. In September 1983 the stockholders sold out to Lancaster Colony, hoping that the larger firm could provide capital to continue the operations. This was unsuccessful - the inefficient layout and competition from abroad, where labor costs were much less, led Lancaster Colony to close the Moundsville plant. They plan to continue the Fostoria name, however, and have moved the molds to 3 other plants they own. How much these molds will be used remains to be seen.

The Fostoria Glass Company got its name from a place in Ohio. During the midwest gas boom the town of that name offered free natural gas to companies who would go into business there. Other firms also took advantage of the offer - Fostoria Glass Novelty Co., Fostoria Novelty Glass Co. (yes, they are 2 different firms), Fostoria Lamp and Shade, and Fostoria Glass Specialty Co. began about this time. The very first piece of glass made in the original Fostoria plant was a salt dip! It is a square shape, unusual bottom (see sketch p. 4), and is engraved with the initials SHB (Sallie Hildreth Brady, wife of one of the founders) and the year 1887. Reportedly Sallie personally pulled the lever on the press to make it.

The gas supply did not last forever, as the townspeople had thought it would. In 1891 the Company sold the plant to Seneca Glass to make blown and cut ware, and took the business to West Virginia. There they had built a new plant near an abundant supply of coal. They operated at this site for almost 100 years. Ironically they switched back to natural gas in 1948, when a pipeline from Texas reached their area.

Fostoria pioneered in the use of national advertising in the glass business. This started in 1924, and was very successful, putting them in the lead among all tableware manufacturing firms. Their business peaked in 1950, when they made over 8 million pieces of glass. Besides their regular line of blown, etched and pressed patterns they did custom work, such as providing dishes with government seals for officials in Washington. All the presidents since Eisenhower have ordered glassware from them. Their AMERICAN pattern was introduced in 1915 and is still in production, making it the most successful pattern in the history of glassmaking. At one time there were over 250 different items of this design offered for sale. The name Fostoria is certainly known to all glass and open salt collectors, and probably is the best known glassware name among the American public.

In trying to track the open salts made by Fostoria, the single best source is the book by Hazel Marie Weatherman. She had access to a complete set of catalogs from 1900 on. No good records of the earlier years are available. We also found catalogs in the Corning Museum library which show some salts not in the Weatherman book. Altogether we know of 42 different shapes of salts that Fostoria made. Our collection has 32 of them, and we are working hard to add to it. The most difficult problem is to identify the Fostoria version when several companies made similar shapes. The square and rectangular shapes are examples of this. We have no museum to help us, as we had with Heisey, so it is possible we will never be certain of every one we get. Perhaps you have information that can add to the picture. We would appreciate hearing it if you do.

(2)
OPEN SALTS BY FOSTORIA

Fostoria Number	Smith Size	Smith No.	H&J No.	Description	Years Made	Largest Dimension	Known Colors for Salts	Notes
1(?)	I		2822	First salt dip	1887-?	1-7/8"	Clear	
93	I			Square salt	1898-1908		Clear	
95	I	94-1-3	2913	Facets and ribs	1898-1908		Clear	A
112	I	10-1-1	2748	Square swirl	1898-1908	1-1/2"	Clear	
	S		3679	Sponge Cup	1898-1908	3"	Clear	
465	I	13-2-2	2852	Tub	1898-1908	1-7/8"	Clear, Lt. Amber	
500	I	78-2-1	2758	ATLANTA	1895-?	1-7/8"	Clear	
501	I,M	10-4-2	2972	HARTFORD	1898-1901	1-3/4"	Clear	C
511	I	24-1-1	2670	Fans & Diam.	1898-1908	2"	Clear	
515	I	13-1-2	2840	Tub, Fine Diam.	1898-1908	2"	Clear	
575	I	15-1-3		CARMEN	1896-1908	1-5/8"	Clear	
585	I	78-5-2		Pointed ends	1898-1908	3"	Clear	
594	I	174-2-3	2779	Rect., rope	1898-1908	2"	Clear	
600	I	22-1-2	335	BRAZILIAN	1898-1913	1-3/4"	Clear, green	
742,743	I,M			Rect., plain	1898-1908		Clear	X
880	I			Blown, footed	1922-1929		Clear	D
960	I			Round, fluted	(1906)		Clear	
1000	I	198-4-2	2706	BEDFORD	1901-1904	2-1/2"	Clear	
1002	I			Round, plain	(1906)		Clear	X
1259	I			Oval, notch rib	(1906)		Clear	
1299	I	53-4-1	2573	LONG BUTTRESS	1904-1913	2-1/4"	Clear	
1432	I	5-2-2	2804	PURITAN	1906-1925		Clear	X
1467	I			VIRGINIA	1906-1915		Clear	
1515	I	80-2-3	2963	LUCERE	1907-1915	1-7/8"	Clear	
1630	I	196-1-3	2631	ALEXIS	1909-1925	2"	Clear	
	I	79-1-1		ALEXIS		2-3/8"	Clear	
	M			ALEXIS		3-1/4"	Clear	
1913	I	196-4-2	332	FLEMISH	1913-1928	1-7/8"	Clear, grn, bl, amber	
2000	I		2634	REGAL	1913-1928	2"	Clear	
	I	17-2-3	2961	REGAL (Footed)		1-7/8"	Clear	
2056	I	22-4-3	2574	AMERICAN	1915-1986+	2"	Clear	
2106	I			VOGUE	1916-1929	2-1/2"	Clear	
	C			VOGUE			Clear	E
2263	I			Blown, low	1922-1928		Clear	D
2374	A	17-4-3	782	Blown swirl		2-3/8"	Clr, pnk, grn, bl, yel, amb	
2412	A	18-4-3	2980	COLONY	1938-1972	2-3/4"	Clear	
2449	I	5-3-1	2611	HERMITAGE	1932-1945	1-3/4"	Clear, lt. yel., amber	
2510	I	25-2-1	3028	SUNRAY	1935-1944	1-7/8"	Clear	
2513	A	15-4-3	415	GRAPE LEAF	1935-1942	2-1/2"	Clr, ameth, grn, cblt, mlk	
2521	I	462-4-1	1001	Bird	(1940)	3"	Clr, ameth, mlk, frosted	
2593	I	174-2-1		Cut-corner cube	1942-1944	1-1/2"	Clear	
		174-2-1		Cut-corner cube		1-5/8"	Clear	
2595	M	290-3-2	3735	Sleigh	1942-1944	3"	Clear, milk	
4095	I	105-3-1	541	OPTIC	1925-1930	1-3/4"	Various	F
?	I	481-3-1	2895	Octagonal	?	1-5/8"	Clear	
(Fig.I)	I			Round dia. pt.	(1985)	2"	Clear	
(Fig.J)	I	291-1-3		6-panel X pattern	(1980)	2"	Clear	
	M	407-3-3	924	Sandwich Repro	(1970's)	3-1/4"	Clear, blue, avocado	

Table Format: Pattern names are capitalized. Dimension is largest of height, width or length. Only one Smith or H&J reference listed, although sometimes several exist. Nut cups listed where pictured in Smith and H&J.

Sizes: I=Individual, M= Master or Table, C= Celery Dip, S= Sponge Cup, A=Indiv. Almond

Shapes: Those not shown in both source books are pictured on page 4.

Notes Column: See next page.

NOTES FROM TABLE:

(A) Several companies made this design in different sizes. We are not sure which is really Fostoria.

(C) Largest dimension on master size HARTFORD is 2-3/4".

(D) #880 and #2263 are blown glass, engraved. Both are listed with the ROSEDALE engraving, 880 also has the FAIRFAX engraving, 2263 also has the LOUISA engraving.

(E) Celery dip is unusual shape, with 2 compartments and a rest for the stalk of celery (see sketch).

(F) OPTIC dishes are blown ware. Salts we know include LOOP OPTIC, clear with amber foot, REGULAR OPTIC, solid green or pink with clear foot. Nut cups include REGULAR OPTIC, clear and SWIRL OPTIC, clear with green foot. Other combinations probably exist.

(X) Salts of this shape were made by a number of companies in a number of sizes and with a number of different bottom decorations. We are currently unable to even guess which ones are really Fostoria.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

We disagree with two listings labelled Fostoria in H&J. Their #3053 is labelled VIGILANT. Our books give no mention of an open salt being made in this pattern, and the salt shown in H&J is not close enough to the VIGILANT design to satisfy our nit-picking tastes. H&J calls their #465 the PERSIAN pattern; the number shown under its picture in the Fostoria catalog does not correspond to the Fostoria number for PERSIAN ware.

There are a lot of Fostoria salts, and we have yet to find a source to help us identify them. We went through our collection and took out all of them we could find, and were surprised that we have 37 of the shapes listed. Many of them we did not know as Fostoria. You may enjoy doing the same. There are also several different shapes that we are now anxious to find:

#2106 VOGUE pattern celery dip. This has to be one of the most unusual salts we have heard about. We don't remember seeing it; if we did, we might have dismissed it as an ash tray. We only found the round salt in this pattern about a year ago, and the celery will probably be even harder to find.

#880 and #2263 blown salts with engraving. We don't remember ever seeing any like this, although the shape and engraving are very clear in the catalog. We'll be keeping our eyes open, but don't know if we'll ever find one or the other.

#500 ATLANTA pattern. This has lions heads around the base of a square dish, and is undoubtedly in demand by animal lovers as well as open salt collectors. We'll need some luck to run across one.

#960 and #1259 are ordinary looking dishes that we probably have ignored in the past. Now we will be watching, and looking even closer at salts that used to seem too common to bother with.

The world of Fostoria salts is one more aspect that makes open salt collecting so interesting. We hope that this listing of them will motivate you to read some of the books and learn more from your own collection, as we have learned from ours.

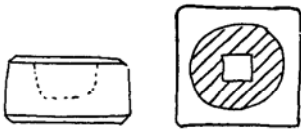
Ed Berg

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March 1987

References: Ten books, "Open Salts Illustrated" by Allan B. and Helen B. Smith
 "5000 Open Salts" by William Heacock and Patricia Johnson
 "Fostoria, Its First 50 Years", by Hazel Marie Weatherman
 "Pressed Glass in America" by John and Elizabeth Welker
 Glass Review, August 1986
 1906 Fostoria Catalog (In Corning Museum Library)

SELECTED OPEN SALTS BY FOSTORIA



1
First Salt Dip



93



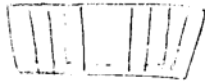
95



500
ATLANTA



575
CARMEN



585



742



743



Fig. J



880



960



1002



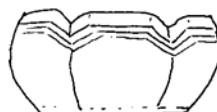
1259



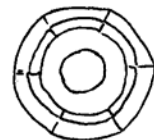
1467
VIRGINIA



1630
ALEXIS (ftd. ind.)



1630
ALEXIS (master)



2000
REGAL



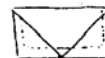
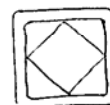
2106
VOGUE



2106
VOGUE (celery dip)



2263



2593

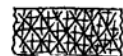


Fig. I