

SALTY COMMENTS #29
(Facts and Opinion on Open Salt Collecting)

It has been a real struggle. For several days we have tried to decipher about 100 old catalog pages that show one or more open salts made by U.S. Glass. We made copies of the pages while wading through many old catalogs at the Corning Museum Library, and came home with the feeling that we had unearthed a gold mine of information. Now we realize that we also found a mountain of frustration.

The U.S. Glass Company was formed on July 1, 1891 from 15 previously independent tableware manufacturers. These were Adams, Bryce, Bellaire Goblet, Central, Columbia, Challinor Taylor, Doyle, Duncan, Gillinder, Hobbs, King, Nickel Plate, O'Hara, Richards & Hartley, and Ripley. Each had a line of glass tableware, and was having a hard time making a profit because of fierce competition. They believed that by combining they could reduce overhead, get the advantage of purchasing in larger quantities, and find new opportunities in foreign markets. Unfortunately they did not figure on the depression which hit the glass industry about 2 years later. This idled all but 4 of their factories by early 1893 and cut their sales to less than 1/3 of what they were in the first year. The economic problems even forced them to lay off many executives who came from the original companies. This move saved salary dollars, but it also released knowledgeable glass men, some of whom opened their own businesses as competitors.

U.S. Glass survived the depression, sold uneconomical plants, built efficient new ones, and by 1914 claimed to be the largest glass manufacturer in the world. About this time they were advertising 30,000 different items in their catalog. They remained profitable through the depression of 1932-40, although they were forced to close many plants. In 1963 a tornado destroyed their main factories in Glassport, PA, and they were unable to recover from the loss. They sold the remaining plant in Tiffin, Ohio and filed for bankruptcy.

Our struggle with U.S. Glass salts comes from the fact that the company was an amalgam of many firms. Each brought its own product line to the party, along with its inventory of each item. The first catalog was a combination of pages from individual catalogs of the founding firms. As stock on hand was sold, many open salts shown in the original catalog were taken off the market. The remainder were sometimes renamed and/or renumbered from one catalog to the next. In addition, many of the plainer "common" shapes were in the line, and the pictures do not show enough detail to let us distinguish the U.S. Glass version from those of the other companies. In listing the salts, we have used the following strategy:

1. We have eliminated all open salts carried over from original companies if they were not given a U.S. Glass number or shown in catalogs after 1891. These we will cover later, when we do research on the specific companies involved.
2. All but the latest catalogs use artist renditions (probably woodcuts) to show the salts. The artists have not been entirely accurate (the BAGWARE salt is shown with a waffle bottom, for instance), so we have made our best guess in identifying what is shown.
3. Numbers and names are sometimes inconsistent. We have guessed that the same shape is only one dish, even if it is labelled differently in different catalogs. As an example, an oblong master salt with an oval rope bottom is called CRYSTAL in one place, #56, #74 and #76 later. The illustrations match exactly, so we assume they are one item.

Besides the frustration, there were several moments of excitement in our search. For example, H&J says that the chick emerging from the egg (H&J 948) is an egg cup. The U.S. Glass catalog clearly labels it the "JUST OUT SALT". We've moved our copy of this dish back into the open salt collection. There is a square dish on legs with a Greek Key border that we have seen but have ignored because it does not look salt-like. This turns out to be the SHERATON pattern celery dip, shown in the illustrations which follow. Now we have to find another one, and buy it this time. We found the origin of the PAVONIA salt. It was originally part of the ROANOKE pattern by Ripley, then later added to the PAVONIA line, probably because it fitted there and saved the cost of a new mold. We also found that the SHOSHONE pattern was originally the VICTOR pattern - who changed the name and when we have not yet established.

The U.S. Glass patterns best known among pattern glass collectors are the State series. Interestingly, only 3 of them have open salts; ILLINOIS, WASHINGTON STATE and NEVADA. The other 28 have shakers; at the turn of the century pattern glass open salts did not seem to be in great demand.

In looking for the U.S. Glass salts in our collection, we were surprised to find that many were missing. Some were "just ordinary square or rectangular" ones that we had probably seen and ignored dozens of times. Others we may have seen, but probably said, "They're heavy old masters, and we're not really interested in masters, are we?". Now that we know what they are, we'll be paying a lot more attention to salts that did not rate a second glance in the past.

In the attached illustrations of U.S. Glass salts we have shown only one size of a particular shape if the second (or third) size is similar. We also use the term "table salt" for what most collectors call a "master salt". This is what the old catalogs called them, and it makes our descriptions agree with the catalogs.

While we have found lots of information about U.S. Glass open salts, we are certain that we have not found everything. If you know anything more about the salts they made, we would very much like to hear from you. Meanwhile we hope you enjoy going through your collection and identifying the open salts we list in the following details and show in the illustrations.

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References:

- "Encyclopedia of Pressed Glass in America" by John and Elizabeth Welker
- "U.S. Glass From A to Z" by William Heacock and Fred Bickenheuser
- "5000 Open Salts" by William Heacock and Patricia Johnson

OPEN SALTS BY U.S. GLASS

<u>Catalog Year(s)</u>	<u>USG No.</u>	<u>Picture No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
1891-1904		1	AMAZON pattern, H&J 3522, table size. Carried over from Bryce. Available with engraved sides.
1891-1904		2	ATLAS pattern, H&J 3686, table size. Carried over from Bryce. Available with engraved sides.
1891-1926		3	CABINET salt, H&J 3665 and 2754, table and individual sizes. Carried over from Adams.
1891-1898		4	DIAMOND HEAVY, table size. Round, diamond point on lower sides. H&J 2517.
1891-1904		5	ELLIPSE table size. Two rows of oval thumbprints on sides, with rope between. H&J 2505.
1891-1891		6	ELLIPSE PLAIN TOP, table size. Same as previous one without the upper row of thumbprints.
1898		7	JUST OUT SALT, evidently a U.S.G, original. Chick emerging from egg.
1898-1909		8	OCTAGON salt, H&J 2951, table and individual sizes. The tub with legs at 4 corners.
1891-1898		9	ROANOKE pattern, used also in the PAVONIA line. H&J 2678. Table and individual sizes.
1891-1898		10	ST. LOUIS salt, table size. Round, two rows of thumbprints around the sides. Probably H&J 2503.
1891-1915	2	11	Octagonal, rayed bottom, individual size.
1891-1915	3	12	Eight-lobed gear shape, H&J 2579, carried over from Bryce. Individual size.
1891-1915	5	13	Basically rectangular, but sides and ends are concave. Oval rope bottom, individual size. H&J 2798.
1891-1915	6	14	Round, sloping sides, waffle bottom. H&J 2588. Individual size.
1915-1926	8	15	DIAMOND or CINCINNATI salt. Diamond faceted sides, individual size. Two other sizes called #103.
1891-1910	18	16	Cylindrical, large flutes on sides, bevelled rim. Carried over from O'Hara. Individual size.
1891-1926	103	17	DIAMOND or CINCINNATI salt. H&J 2908. Diamond faceted sides, table and individual size.
1891-1898	250	18	LATE BLOCK pattern, carried over from Doyle. Table and individual sizes.
1891-1904	308	19	Duncan's BLOCK pattern, both table and Individual size.
1919	656	20	Oval HONEYCOMB pattern salt, shown as part of a condiment set. Probably table size.
1957	4193	21	EARLY AMERICAN SANDWICH pattern, picked up when they bought molds from Duncan and Miller in 1955. Individual size, H&J 2687.
1891-1898	6105	22	Double, oval shell bowls, fan-shaped handle.
1891-1898	6106	23	Double, two heavy 8-sided dishes, round bowl, post handle.
1915	9525	24	Oval, probably mid-size, band of cane pattern around the lower sides. Probably H&J 2731.
1891-1898	15001	25	O'Hara DIAMOND pattern, an interesting old table size.
1891	15038	26	ELECTRIC pattern, H&J 2567, both table and individual size.
1891-1898	15040	27	DIAMOND BRIDGES pattern, round, row of sunk diamonds around sides, Table and individual size.

<u>Catalog Year(s)</u>	<u>USG No.</u>	<u>Picture No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
1904	15041	28	PINEAPPLE AND FAN pattern, H&J 2670. Fostoria made an similar one; we don't know what the difference is.
1891	15046	29	VICTOR pattern, now called SHOSHONE. Individual size.
1891	15047	30	COLONIAL pattern, H&J 2629, carried over from Adams. Both table and individual size.
1891-1898	15050	31	Round with collar base, individual size. Dishes can be stacked. Other companies made similar salts, we can't identify which are U.S. Glass. Like H&J 2512.
1891-1898	15050	32	Table size in this item #, but it does not resemble the individual. Round, bulging sides, engraved.
1898-1904	15052	33	ILLINOIS pattern, H&J 2760, listed as a celery dip. Individual size.
1904	15074	34	WASHINGTON STATE pattern, H&J 2518, both table and individual sizes.
1904	15075	35	NEVADA pattern, H&J 2624, both table and individual sizes.
1904	15112	36	PATTEE CROSS pattern, H&J 185, offered as a toy berry bowl, gold decorated.
1919	15144	37	SHERATON pattern, shallow square dish on legs, GREEK KEY design on flaring rim, listed as celery dip.
1915	15151	38	Tab-handled tub, picture shows 10 sides, individual size.

OVAL SALTS, PLAIN SIDES

1904-1915		39	BRILLIANT salt, table size. Waffle bottom diagonal to the axis of the dish. H&J 2728.
1891-1909		40	PLAIN OVAL salt, individual, medium and large size listed. Oval rope bottom. H&J 2688 and 3519.
1891-1919	99	41	STANDARD salt, oval, rayed bottom, table and individual sizes. H&J 2690.

RECTANGULAR (OBLONG) SALTS, PLAIN SIDES

1898		42	GRANT salt, oblong, table size, rope bottom.
1891-1926	56	43	Oblong, table size, oval rope bottom. Listed variously as #56, #74, #76, #401 and the CRYSTAL salt. Confusing, but they all look the same in the U.S. Glass catalogs.
1915	215	44	Oblong, table size, oval rope bottom. Sounds like the last one, but the proportions are slightly different, and it appears as a separate dish in the same catalog as one of the others. H&J 2816.
1891-1926	800	45	Duncan's BAGWARE pattern, H&J 2795. Both table and individual size.

SQUARE SALTS, PLAIN SIDES

1891-1919	1	46	High sides, round bowl, bottom may be rayed or rope - picture unclear. Individual size.
1891-1919	4	47	Bevelled corners, square bowl, rope bottom. Table and individual sizes. Also shown as Plain Square, #68 and #98. Probably H&J 2832.
1891-1915	8	48	Slightly bevelled edges, waffle bottom. Individual size. H&J 2762.

OPEN SALTS BY U. S. GLASS



Mixed masters and individuals. Not to scale