
NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Pittsburgh's First Glass Trade Association?

By James S. Measell.

IN 1862, more than a decade prior to the founding of the Western Flint and Lime Glass Protective Association,¹ a number of Pittsburgh glasshouses and a Wheeling firm formed a trade association. There is little material to document this group's activities, but its constitution and by-laws are extant. These are in the hand of James M. Richards, who was affiliated with Bryce, Richards and Company.²

The first sentence of the preamble reflects both the association's outlook and its constituency: "Whereas the interests of the Flint and Lime glass trade have suffered materially from the want of a free and unembarrassed interchange of opinions among those interested, and believing that great advantages may be derived by the united efforts of all those who feel desirous of promoting the welfare of the glass manufacture[rs]; therefore we hereby establish an association in this City, to be called the Flint and Lime Glass Association." The members sought to gather "the statistics of the trade, domestic and foreign" and professed a wish to exchange "ideas and experiences as to the manufacture of glass. . . ." The final clause in the preamble reveals the group's major goals, ". . . especially to regulate the production and establish and regulate schedules of prices and terms of credit in the trade." The regulation of prices, of course, was probably viewed as a prelude to a general rise in prices, for a united body of manufacturers could, in theory at least, control both output and prices.

James S. Measell is an associate professor in the Department of Speech Communication, Theatre and Journalism at Wayne State University in Detroit. His articles on the history of various American glass companies have appeared in publications ranging from *The Indiana Magazine of History* and *The Magazine ANTIQUES* to *Hobbies* and *The Antique Trader Weekly*.—Editor

- 1 James S. Measell, "The Western Flint and Lime Glass Protective Association, 1874-1887," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 66 (October 1983), 313-34.
- 2 The constitution, by-laws, and several amendments occupy a few pages in a lined copybook which also contains the minutes of the yearly meetings of the Flint and Lime Glass Manufacturers of the East and the West, 1862-1866; Richards was also secretary of this group in 1862. I am indebted to Mr. Frank M. Fenton, Chairman of the Board of the Fenton Art Glass Company in Williamstown, West Virginia, for making these records available to me.

ADAMS, MACKLIN & CO.

MANUFACTURERS OF

FLINT GLASS.

WAREHOUSE,

Corner of Ross and Water Streets.

JAS. B. LYON & CO.

MANUFACTURERS OF

PRESSED, CUT AND PLAIN FLINT

GLASSWARE.

NO. 48 WOOD STREET.

PHILLIPS & BEST,

MANUFACTURERS OF

CUT, PRESSED AND

PLAIN FLINT GLASSWARE,

TRY STREET.

Advertising "cards" for Pittsburgh glass manufacturers, Pittsburgh City Directory, 1856-1857

This view became the cornerstone of the glass "trusts" formed later.³

The constitution and by-laws (a copy of which is now available in the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania library) detail the duties of the officers, the meeting time, the order of business, etc., in the usual manner of any organization. The original articles provided for monthly meetings, but an amendment, passed July 8, 1862, called upon the members to assemble regularly "... on Tuesday of each and every week at the hour of 2½ o'clock p.m." A subsequent amendment (September 16, 1862) reinstated the monthly schedule, so whatever pressing matters may have precipitated the earlier change must have abated within a few months.

Eight Pittsburgh-area establishments signed the constitution and by-laws: James B. Lyon and Company; Bryce, Richards and Company; Phillips and Best; King and Company; Atterbury, Reddick and Company; Blackburn and Ulam; T. A. Evans and Company; and Adams and Company.⁴ One other member, Hobbs and Barnes, was located in Wheeling. All of these were primarily manufacturers of flint tableware (and possibly lamp chimneys), a branch of the glass industry separate and distinct from the window glass or bottle plants.

Unfortunately, there seem to be no accounts of this association's proceedings or of the identities of its officers. The Pittsburgh group may have continued to meet during the 1862-1866 period, for there are a few allusions, albeit circumspect, to regional activity in the flint glass industry among the papers of the later trade associations.⁵ In any case, this confederation of manufacturers was, in all likelihood, Pittsburgh's first glass trade association. ■

3 Both the United States Glass Company (1891) and the National Glass Company (1899) were Pennsylvania corporations and both were headquartered in Pittsburgh.

4 Most of these are discussed by Lowell Innes in his *Pittsburgh Glass, 1797-1891: A History and Guide for Collectors* (Boston, 1976), 48-57; Blackburn and Ulam were, I believe, affiliated with the Birmingham Flint Glass Company (see Innes, 36). Conspicuous by their absence from the list of signators are several major names in Pittsburgh tableware firms—Bakewell, Ihmsen, and McKee.

5 James Gillinder, "25th Anniversary Address," in *Papers Read Before the Members at the Annual Meetings at Atlantic City, July 1900 and 1901* (Pittsburgh: American Association of Flint and Lime Glass Manufacturers, n.d.), 3-4.