



THOMAS & KATHERINE DETRE

LIBRARY & ARCHIVES TREASURES

By Sierra Green, Archivist

Glassware on Record: Bryce Brothers and Lenox, Inc., Records

Newly processed in the History Center's Detre Library & Archives as a part of a NHPRC Documenting Democracy Grant is the Bryce Brothers and Lenox Incorporated Glass Records, a corporate collection donated to the History Center in 2006 that includes records from 1828 to 2002. The collection's oldest records provide insights into the early history of the Bryce Brothers Company. More contemporary materials reflect the acquisition of the Bryce Company by Lenox, Inc., in 1965 and document the company's evolution up to the Mount Pleasant plant closing in 2002. Given the breadth, volume, and uniqueness of its records, this corporate archives is a veritable treasure trove of materials relating to the industrial and design history of the glass manufacturing in Mount Pleasant, Pa.

Bryce Brothers Company

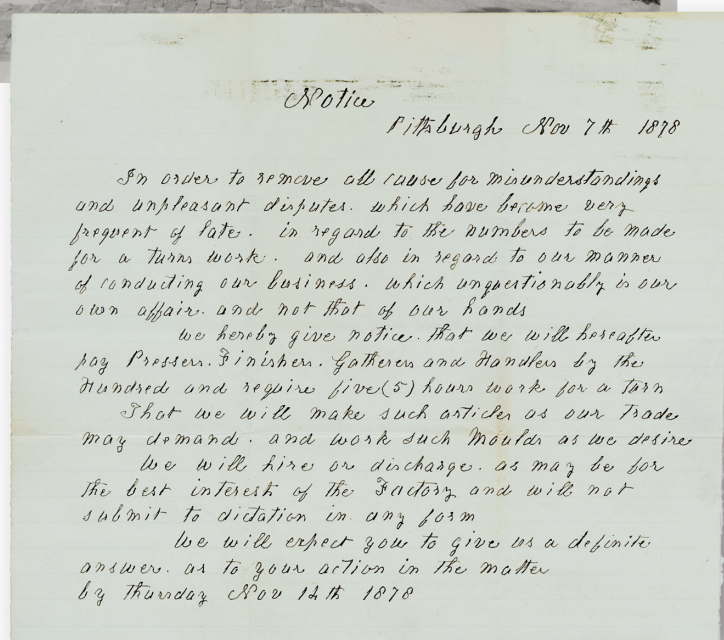
The records in the Bryce Brothers Company collection, filling 95 boxes, provide firsthand insights into the production and sale of its glassware over time. Complementing the collection's early business and administrative records is an intriguing cache of records relating to 19th century labor relations. Researchers can discover documentation of labor compensation concerns that arose over time between Bryce Brothers Company and



ABOVE: Bryce Brothers Company office building exterior, (undated).

RIGHT: Notice given to glassworkers by the Bryce Walker & Co. handwritten by James S. Bryce, 1878.

All images HHC Detre L&A, Bryce Brothers and Lenox, Inc. Records, MSS 800.



3-28-21 (1) 1 skip

Canary	Sand	350	Lbs
	Lead	75	"
	Soda	125	"
22 Komet	Nitre	20	"
	Lime	25	"
	Uranium	3	"
		598	"

Fill 21 pot - fadded
Cullet 490 "

Filled again 4th Uranium 1 skip
598 batch 490 above cullet
Color too dark. (2)

Fadded cullet and filled
again with 3 skips of
batch 1800 lb with
8 lb of Uranium in the
3 skips. and all cullet
March 30-1921

Making 3 lbs of Uranium
in 1st fill - 4 lb " in 2nd fill
8 lbs of Uranium in 3rd
fill. - 15 lbs of Uranium
in all.

Good Color

Use 3 lbs Uranium to a
skip

Batch recipe for canary-colored glass that appears in a Bryce Brothers batch book belonging to William McNaughton, 1921.

other stakeholders, including the American Flint Glass Workers Union, the United States Glass Company, the Glass Table Ware Manufacturers, and individual employees.

One notable document is an original notice handwritten by James S. Bryce directed to glassworkers in November 1878. This direct communication by what was then Bryce Walker & Co. was meant to assert the company's authority to set employee compensation structures as well as to dictate which products it manufactured. Based on supporting documentation in the collection, this formal communication is a direct reiteration of an agreement forged between Bryce Walker & Co. and nine other local glass houses that were members of the Glass Table Ware Manufacturers of Pittsburgh. The labor dispute that resulted from this notice halted production in local glass houses that did not resume again until February 1879.¹ Bryce Walker & Co. was among the few glass houses that restarted operations with experienced glassworkers, some of whom personally received "threatening letters ornamented with skulls, crossbones, and coffins" for their decision to return to work.²

Beyond labor records, this collection also includes original design and production materials of Bryce Brothers glassware. The glass manufacturing process is documented within two batch books, the older of which contains references to batch ingredients from what appears to be as early as 1877. The second batch book belonged to William McNaughton and persists as a testament to the trials and tribulations of mixing colored glass. Dating to 1921, the first page of the volume reveals the challenge McNaughton faced to determine the appropriate amount of uranium to add to a batch to attain a particular shade of canary (McNaughton's answer: three pounds). Complementing these batch books



Dunes Crest 220-8860
A.J. Wertheimer 8-25-34



Cherry Hills Country Club



10-4-34 (Carson)



UNITED STATES
STATE DEPARTMENT



10-4-34- (Carson)



Beck 10-26-34



Page selected from Pantograph Etch Book featuring crests of commercial clients, 1934-1935.

is a volume titled "Engraving and decorating for etched starts" that contains original notes and formulae for polishing acid, white acid, Erie acid, frosting acid, and transfer wax used to etch designs into pieces of glassware.

Alongside Bryce Brothers batch books are pantograph etch and band books, whose pages are filled with band design sketches and production specifications. Particularly informative are the pantograph etch books, which include numerous sketches of the crests and logos of Bryce Brothers clients from the 1920s through '40s. Clients depicted through their emblems include, but are not limited to: Curtiss-Wright, the U.S. State Department, the Top of the Needle Restaurant, the Hotel San Diego, Wesley Memorial Hospital, and numerous other hotels and country clubs.

Lenox, Inc.

The materials in the collection from Lenox, Inc., comprise a wealth of records that document the management, design, production, and marketing of the company's glassware. Of interest within the records is an *Introducing Lenox Crystal* booklet created for salesmen to familiarize them with the company's expansion into the glassware industry. Also related to the acquisition and early management of Bryce Brothers is the outgoing and select incoming correspondence of John M. Tassie, president of Lenox, Inc. These letters, which include in-depth business and financial assessments of Bryce Brothers, provide a substantive glimpse into the Bryce Brothers Company in the months preceding the acquisition in 1965. In addition, this collection contains press releases

and other corporate publications that notably interweave the long history of Bryce Brothers with the Lenox brand in order to announce the arrival of the china manufacturer into the crystal glassware market.

What fills the remaining 70 boxes and comprises the vast majority of the corporate archives are the product design records. These primarily consist of new product introductions, design drawings, cutting drawings, CAD drawings, production specifications, quality control records, standard operating procedures, and designer files. These materials reflect the process of designing, manufacturing, and assessing crystal glassware pieces produced by Lenox, Inc. Particularly revelatory are the files of individual designers that document the creative and administrative

LENOX CRYSTAL
NEW PRODUCT INTRODUCTION

SEASON/FISCAL YEAR OF INTRODUCTION: Fall 1997 DNA 4724 G
DNA 4725 W
DNA 4727 B
DNA 4726 F

ITEM DESCRIPTION: Stature Gold - C19 DRAWING #: _____

BRAND Lenox

Goblet Wine Beverage Flute

CATEGORY: Blown Stemware SOURCED OR DOMESTIC: Domestic

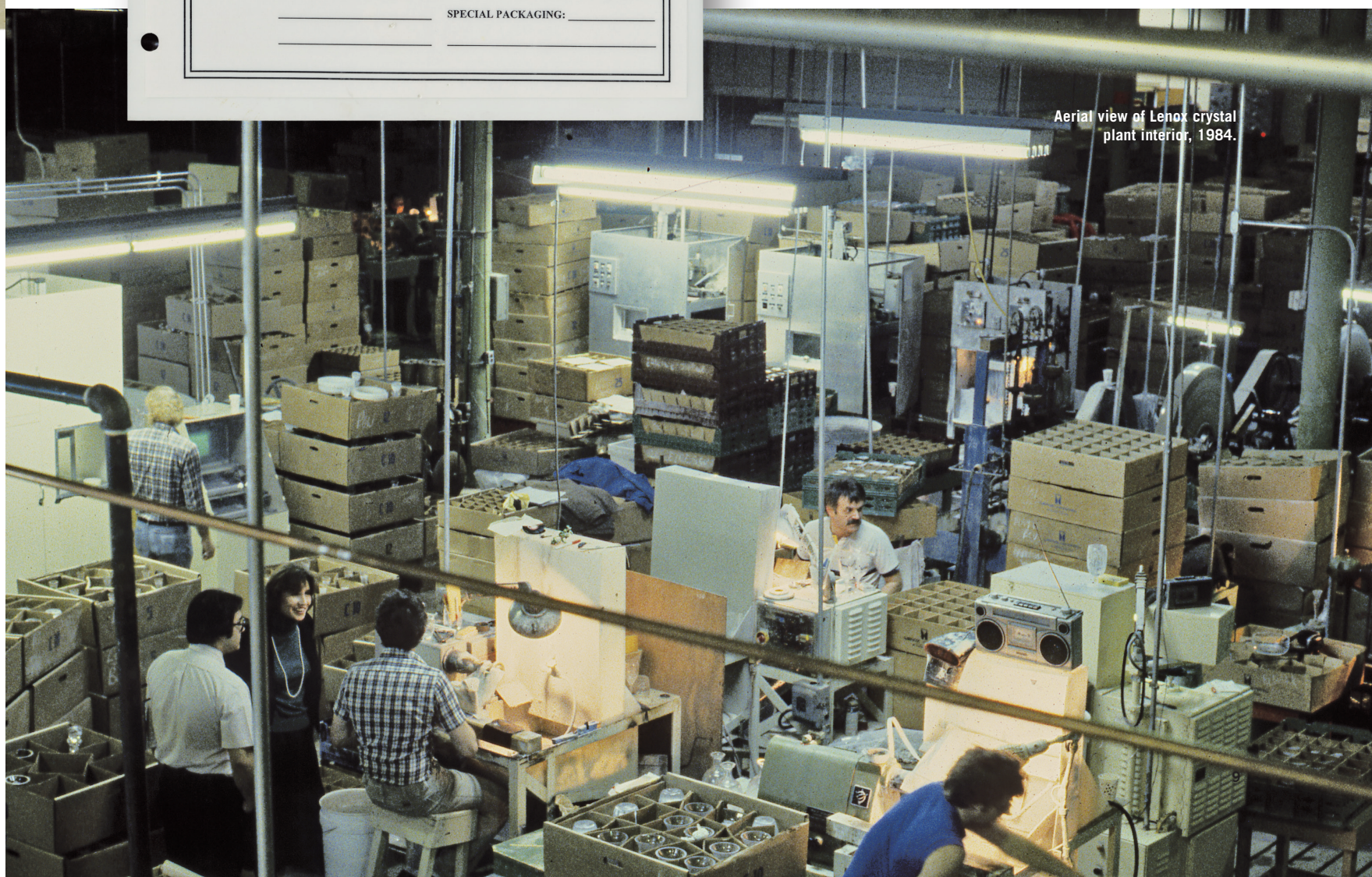
FINISHED HEIGHT: 324.0 mm G
287.6 mm W
303.5 mm B
330.3 mm F BAND WIDTH: 3 mm

ACCESSORIES: _____ EXCLUSIVE: _____

SPECIAL PACKAGING: _____

Those wishing to explore these and other materials are welcome to view the collection in person at the Heinz History Center's Detre Library & Archives. Access is free and open to all during the Detre Library & Archives' normal research hours (Wednesday-Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) Visit <http://bit.ly/2gMjGHe> for an online guide to this collection.

² "Local Briefs," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, February 10, 1879.



Aerial view of Lenox crystal plant interior, 1984.