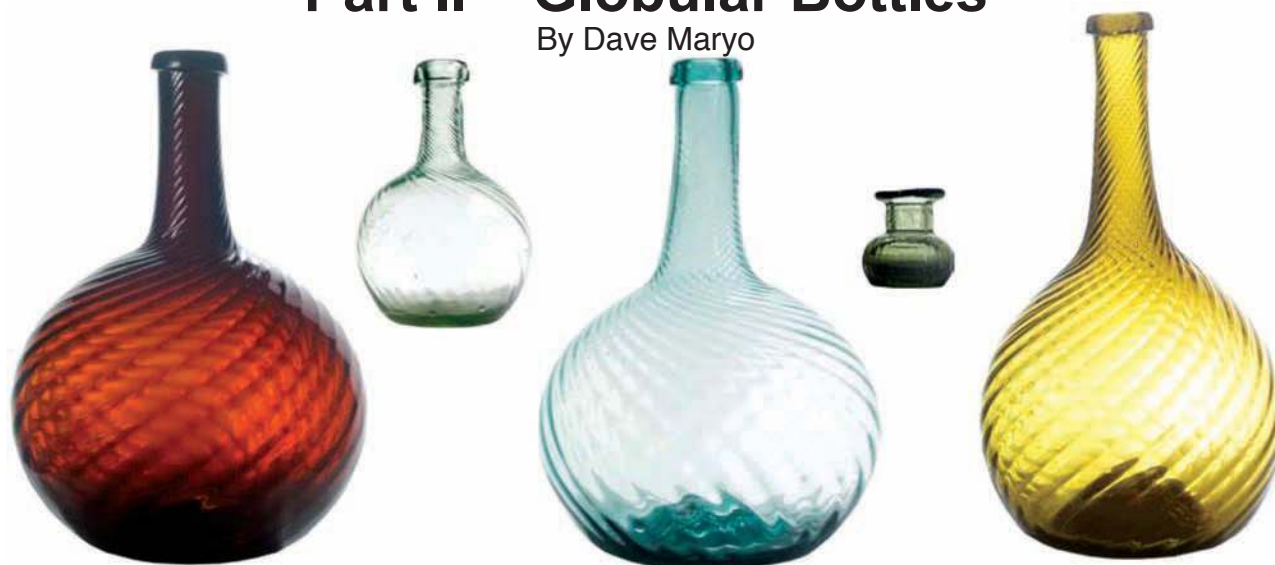


# Early American Midwestern Glass

## Part II – Globular Bottles

By Dave Maryo



This article focuses on the most commonly known Early American Midwestern Glass bottle. The Midwestern globular bottle is a free blown variation of the earlier black glass onion bottles produced in Europe. Some of the more refined European onion bottles were known as shaft-and-globe types that were used for decanters.

The Midwestern globular bottle is a version of the shaft-and-globe style decanter that was produced in the Midwest region of America during the early 1800s. Since Midwestern globular bottles were intended to be decanters, most were made with ribbed patterns as a decorative feature. Some Midwestern globular bottles were produced without the pattern molded ribs. The plain examples are very rare, but are less desirable to collectors today. The ribbed examples were produced using German style dip molds to create the pattern. After the glass gather was shaped by the rib mold it could be twisted to form a swirling pattern before the bottle was expanded and shaped in the blowing process. Depending on which direction the glass gather was twisted the ribs would form a pattern swirled to the right or left. Some pattern molded globular bottles were produced without swirling the gather which created a vertical ribbed pattern. The number of ribs can vary depending on the individual pattern mold that the glass house used. Only a small number of bottles were produced using diamond or three part mold patterns making those examples extremely rare.

Most of the Midwestern globular bottles found today are not dug examples. These decanters were highly prized at the time they were produced and collected over the years. They were also very fragile since the glass was thin and not many could survive being thrown down privies or tossed into dumps. Midwestern globular bottles were produced in a variety of colors with light amber being the most common. Normal colors are variations of amber, aqua, blue, or green. Examples in green and blue are not as common as amber or aqua examples. Most Midwestern globular bottles are between eight and ten inches in height. Larger

examples have been expanded to the point that the ribbed pattern is less defined. Smaller examples are also found, but are normally not intended for bar decanters and are also less common.

An area of concern when collecting Midwestern globular bottles is the fact that they have been reproduced over the years by glass workers in Mexico and other locations making the collector suspicious of examples for sale today. Collectors familiar with the originals can normally spot a reproduction without close examination, but a novice collector could be easily duped by the large number of reproductions currently on the market.

Collectors of Midwestern globular bottles look for features of very thin glass, a rolled over collar, and ribs that end on the base of the bottle. Most authentic Midwestern globular bottles have ribs that end in a circular pattern at the base known as a terminal ring or have ribs that extend to a central point in the base. The difference is one bottle was made in an open bottom mold leaving the ribs to end in a circular pattern while the other was made in a closed bottom mold leaving the ribs to flow to a single point on the base.

The pattern molded ribs on most reproduction globular bottles do not extend on to the base of the bottle. Poor control of the glass blowing process and over working the base tends to cause the ribs to fade leaving no visible pattern on the base. While these features described do not guarantee that the bottle is an original, understanding these features will help identify some of the reproductions currently on the market.



**The End**