

An Unlikely Find!

By Barry L. Bernas

You Just Never Know!

According to separate listings in the *Fruit Jar Annual* and *Red Book 9*, the unmarked jar that goes with the glass cap carrying the date October 24th, 1905 is considered to be “not available” and “scarce.”¹ In the last decade, I’ve only seen four of these jars.² But yet, on a Friday afternoon in early May 2006, I came across twelve others in the Featherstone Square Antique Mall in Woodbridge, Virginia. Per the store’s manager, Rose Ksanznak, this stash had several more mates which she didn’t purchase at a dairy farm auction west of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

How could a dozen of relatively uncommon packers jars go unnoticed for so long? When acquired by Ms. Ksanznak, some of these containers had paper labels on them which were hand dated in the 1960s. Inside several of them were home grown spices that had long since desiccated. Obviously, the former Pittsburgh area owner liked these odd vessels and put each to good use in her kitchen. Now thanks to this women’s interest, two sizes of a jar unknown to most collectors have been preserved.

The Jar in General

The jars in this group are quite unassuming by nature. They are clear in color, mostly unembossed and cylindrical in shape. Their uniqueness centers on the characteristics found in the design and make up of their finish. As far as I know, only two sizes of this container have been documented to date.³ In addition to the two new finds, this article will introduce you to one more.

The Finish - Design Traits

As I just mentioned, there are several underlying elements which made this region distinctive. These are: 1) a threaded area that is canted ever so slightly inward from the top of the neck to the lip; 2) no side seams throughout the threaded area; 3) a protruding vertical neck with side seams; 4) a continuous thread with a width of $\frac{1}{16}$ th inch or less that merges into the neck and 5) a “differential thread” that increased in outward limits as it spiraled downward

over the jar’s sloping threaded area before merging into the top of the neck.

Of note, the five attributes I just reviewed are indigenous to several packing vessels made to be sealed by other glass covers conceived by William B. Fenn. These basic traits appear on the machine made SIMPLEX in a diamond and FLACCUS BROS. STEERS HEAD FRUIT JAR embossed models as well as the smooth lip, unembossed Sunshine packing container from the Illinois Glass Company.⁴

The Finish - In Particular

The dozen jars that I came across in Woodbridge plus the others that I’ve seen have at least three different styles of finishes among the examples. A picture of the each one can be seen in **Figure 1**.

On the left-hand specimen or style 1, there is a $\frac{1}{32}$ nd of an inch wide thread that winds around the threaded area over four times before merging into the top of the vertical neck. This last component of the finish on this jar (neck) extends outward from the threaded region. On its outer surface are four geometric forms. Two are on one side of the neck with the other two directly opposite their mates on the backside of the same container part. These objects are composed of two triangular panels angled outward from the neck while resting flat against the vertical backdrop.

The middle version or style 2 has a $\frac{1}{16}$ th inch wide thread vice one that was $\frac{1}{32}$ nd of an inch in width. It goes around the threaded area for more than one turn (not four) before merging into the vertical neck. The same four triangular objects are present on the outer surface of this jar’s neck.

The right-side version or style 3 has a $\frac{1}{16}$ th of an inch wide thread which goes around the threaded region a little over one time. The difference between style 2 and this one is the absence of the four geometric

shapes on the outer surface of the vertical neck.

The Rest of the Jars

Figure 2 contains a picture of the five jars in this series. As you can see, these packers’ vessels are straight sided. None of them have any embossing on their front or back regions. And each one has a cup bottom mold kind of base.

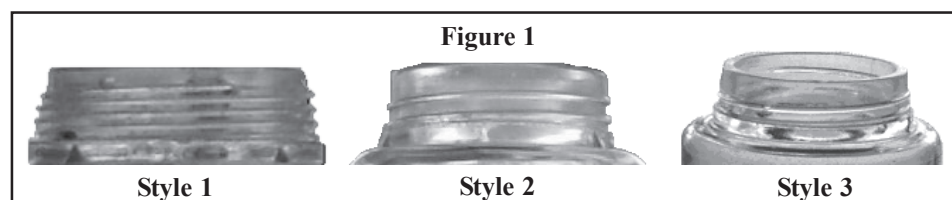
The labeled example on the far left is 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ th inches tall (without the cap). It has a style 3 finish and is 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. On the underneath side is a circular valve mark that is $\frac{3}{4}$ th of an inch wide. This jar holds twenty-seven and one-half ounces when filled to the lip.⁵

The second model in from the left is the first of my Featherstone discoveries. It is 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ th inches in height. The finish under the cap on it is a style 3. Its diameter comes out to be 2 $\frac{11}{16}$ th inches. On the base is a $\frac{5}{8}$ th inch in diameter valve mark. This rendition can hold sixteen ounces at the lip.

The middle specimen is the second of my Woodbridge finds. Its height is 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ th inches. This version has a style 2 finish underneath the glass cover. Ten other counterparts from the Virginia antiques mall had a style 1 closure. The pictured jar is 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ th inches in diameter. On the base is found a $\frac{5}{8}$ th inch in diameter circular valve mark. Of interest, three of the ten style 1 associates to this vessel have a crudely scripted $\frac{1}{2}$ inch tall number within the valve mark. The digits 1 and 5 have been encountered. The central jar in **Figure 2** has a capacity when filled to the brim of thirteen fluid ounces.

The labeled model positioned second from the right is 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ th inches tall and 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ th inches wide. It has a style 2 kind of finish inside the all glass sealer. On the underneath segment, there is a $\frac{5}{8}$ th inch in diameter valve mark. The maximum capacity of this sample is twelve ounces.⁶

The fifth model appears on the right in **Figure 2**. This smaller previously unreported edition is 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ th inches in height and has a style 1 finish. Being 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ th inches in diameter, there is a $\frac{5}{8}$ th inch wide circular valve mark on the base with a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch tall, crudely scripted 3 inside of it. When filled



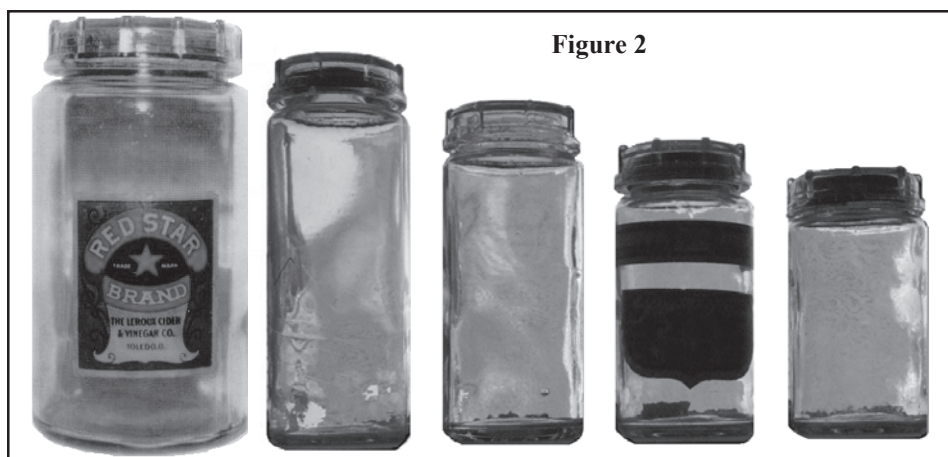


Figure 2

to capacity, this jar holds eleven fluid ounces.

Are There More Sizes Yet to be Found?

A theoretical estimate can be made for the existence of other capacity jars in this series. The chart in **Figure 3** illustrates what I mean.

The three columns are titled according to the known finish styles on this model of container. The five sizes I talked about are placed in this line-up without a parenthesis. Those digits encased by this grammatical symbol represent the jars in that finish type and size which may be awaiting discovery. If my hypothetical exercise has any merit, there are many more packing vessels of this group still to be found and catalogued.

The Cap for these Jars

The cover for the aforementioned packing containers is attributed to at least three patents issued to William B. Fenn.⁷ A top and side view of it is depicted in **Figure 4**.

Mr. Fenn's cap has been reported in only two sizes. The smaller one has an outer diameter of between 2 ⁹/₁₆th and 2 ¹¹/₁₆th inches. The larger example has been measured at 3 ¹/₄th inches across the center.

The former model is ¹³/₁₆th of an inch

tall. Its ¹/₄th inch long bracket-shaped band juts out from the outer skirt just above the cover's bottom edge. At the top of this band are eight log-shaped, ³/₁₆th inch wide grippers equally spaced around the outer skirt. So far, this cap fits the eleven through sixteen ounce jars seen in Figure 2.

For the latter specimen, the same measurements are computed on the corresponding external features. Besides the outer diameter, the only difference between this version and its smaller family member is the number of vertical ribs around the outer skirt. On the bigger sample, there are twelve grippers. The larger version is seen on the twenty-seven and one-half ounce edition of container in Figure 2.

Either example of this 1905 patented cover has embossing on its top surface. The most prevalent style has the phrase - WARM CAP SLIGHTLY TO SEAL OR UNSEAL - in capital letters aligned around the outer edge of the top of the cap. Inside of it on three separate lines is an inscribed abbreviation and date - PAT'D OCT 24 1905 - in large alpha-numeric characters.⁸ A more in depth review of this variety of all glass sealer and its variations will be accomplished in another article.

Are the Jars in Figure 2 "Sunshine" Jars?

There seems to be some confusion in the collecting public about this issue. At least in my mind, there is some haziness on the matter. Or maybe, I'm the only one that is puzzled! See what you think.

Most fruit jar personalities refer to the containers in Figure 2 by the name "sunshine." Dr. Julian H. Toulouse seemed to have started this practice in his seminal work - *A Collectors' Manual FRUIT JARS*. In this 1969 book, the author associated the containers in this article with a different jar (SUNSHINE JAR) from the Illinois Glass Company. Off and on for the next thirty plus years, the same nickname (sunshine) has been applied simultaneously to both groups of jars by subsequent drafters of fruit jar manuals.⁹ This continuing situation has confounded me. Outside of the patentee, I don't believe there is any other direct connection.

In the Spring 2006 edition of *Bottles and Extras*, I presented what I thought was convincing evidence there was a Sunshine jar and that it was made and marketed by the Illinois Glass Company.¹⁰ This example corresponded solely with the first listing of a "SUNSHINE JAR" in Julian Toulouse's tome.

If you look at the measurements, jar characteristics, closure design and sealing specifications for the Illinois Glass Company's designated Sunshine jar, you will see that these vary substantially from those detailed for the series of packing containers in this article. This in itself leads me to conclude that the Figure 2 vessels aren't "sunshine" jars.

In my way of looking at this matter, the jars in this article should be considered distinct from the Sunshine packing container made by the Illinois Glass Company. Henceforth, any further association between to two should be severed.

What Company Made the Jars in Figure 2?

If my evidence about the Sunshine jar was as convincing to you as it was to me, then what firm could have made the jars in this article?

Figure 3		
Style 1	Style 2	Style 3
(?)	(?)	(?)
11	(11)	(11)
(12)	12	(12)
13	13	(13)
(?)	(?)	(?)
(16)	(16)	16
(?)	(?)	(?)
(27 ½)	(27 ½)	27 ½
(?)	(?)	(?)



Figure 4

The electrotpe in **Figure 5** offers one possibility. It comes from a Federal Glass Company advertisement which appeared in the 1907 edition of *Thomas' Wholesale Grocery and Kindred Trades Register*. Along with this extract was the promotion's wording which follows directly.

"'The Federal Jar' The Only Sanitary All Glass Jar on the Market NO RUBBER OR METAL USED TO SEAL THIS JAR Pronounced by all who see it to be **without an equal**. The seal is comprised of chemically pure mineral matter. If used properly perfect satisfaction is guaranteed. The most simple and effective seal ever made. Jars made in all glass...Federal Glass Company, Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A.'"¹¹

Even though it comes down to an individual judgment based on personal observation, I think the sketch of the "The Federal Jar" from the Federal Glass promotion aligns nicely with the pictures of the jars in Figure 2.

What quickly caught my eye was the profile of the all glass cap in the Federal ad. The cover had a broad band at the bottom of the outer skirt just like the ones in Figures 2 and 4. In similar fashion, the vertical grippers were log-shaped and began their ascent upward at the top of this broad band. These features started to

convince me that the October 24th, 1905 marked caps were the production models of the sealers depicted in the 1907 Federal sales pitch.

When I turned to the outline of the container in the same advertisement, its sloping shoulder, cylindrical shape and unembossed motif immediately directed my attention back to the jars in Figure 2. In my opinion, the left-hand example in that box is a near perfect match for "The Federal Jar" in Figure 5.

Summation

Right now, the only hint that the containers in Figure 2 came from the Federal Glass Company is a single shred of evidence that requires the interpreter to make a definitive judgment based on it. Besides the fact that William B. Fenn was in the Columbus area when the ad was published, there isn't any other trail to follow in order to answer the question, "What company made the packing vessels in this article?" For now, I maintain the jars in this account are examples of "The Federal Jar" from the Federal Glass Company of Columbus, Ohio. Only time will prove my assessment to be right or wrong.

Regardless of the manufacturer, there are now five sizes of what I call the "Federal Jar" known to exist. With Figure 3 as a guide, there may be others out in "hobbyland" just waiting to be recognized. Can you help bring these other models out of hiding?

If you have information on more "Federal Jar" sizes, finish styles or cap variations, I'd enjoy seeing and discussing your data. Also, if you have a Federal Glass Company product catalog or brochure from the 1906 through 1910 years, I'd appreciate hearing from you if "The Federal Jar" is shown and described within it.

BLB

Endnotes

¹ *The Guide To Collecting Fruit Jars Fruit Jar Annual Volume 11 - 2006*, Jerry McCann, 5003 W. Berwyn Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, pg. 162 and *The Collector's Guide to Old FRUIT JARS, Red Book 9*, Douglas M. Leybourne, Jr., P. O. Box 5417, North Muskegon, Michigan, pg. 307.

² *The Label Space The Book*, Tom Caniff, Phoenix Press, A Division of Fruit Jar Annual, Jerry McCann, 5003 W. Berwyn Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, pg. 141. This

reference pictured one model. I own two others and missed out on another on eBay.

³ *The Label Space The Book*, Tom Caniff, Phoenix Press, A Division of Fruit Jar Annual, Jerry McCann, 5003 W. Berwyn Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, pg. 141; *Fruit Jar Rambles*, Tom Caniff, *Antique Bottle & Glass Collector*, June 2004, pgs. 6-7; and *The Collector's Guide to Old FRUIT JARS, Red Book 9*, Douglas M. Leybourne, Jr., P.O. Box 5417, North Muskegon, Michigan, pg. 307.

⁴ *Perfection Glass Company, One of Many Glass Houses in Washington, Pennsylvania*, Barry L. Bernas, 239 Ridge Avenue, Gettysburg, PA, 17325, pg. XXXII and *Another Glass Cap and Jar Inspired by William B. Fenn*, Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles and Extras*, Spring 2006, pgs 54-55 and 57. The thread width on the SIMPLEX, FLACCUS and Sunshine models is 1/8th of an inch vice 1/16th or less.

⁵ *The Label Space The Book*, Tom Caniff, Phoenix Press, A Division of Fruit Jar Annual, Jerry McCann, 5003 W. Berwyn Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, pg. 141 and *Fruit Jar Rambles*, Tom Caniff, *Antique Bottle & Glass Collector*, June 2004, pgs. 6-7. Both references carried the same picture of this jar. The photograph I used in this article was graciously provided by Tom Caniff. Also, the measured capacity of the pictured jar was kindly furnished by him as well. In his *Fruit Jar Rambles* article, Mr. Caniff referred to this jar as having a capacity of "quart-size." As a point of note, the twenty-seven and one-half ounce capable container in this article is the same "quart-size" one in Tom Caniff's excellent article.

⁶ *Fruit Jar Rambles*, Tom Caniff, *Antique Bottle & Glass Collector*, June 2004, pgs. 6-7. The jar pictured second from the right in Figure 2 originally appeared in Mr. Caniff's article.

⁷ *Fruit Jar Patents Volume III 1900-1942*, compiled by Dick Roller, Acorn Press, Paris, Illinois, 1996, pgs. 180-182; UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE. WILLIAM B. FENN, OF COLUMBUS, OHIO. CLOSING DEVICE FOR VESSELS. Application filed March 28, 1906, Serial No. 308,383. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Feb. 12, 1907. No. 843,670 and UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE. WILLIAM B. FENN, OF COLUMBUS, OHIO. RING FOR SEALING JARS AND THE LIKE. Application filed April 16, 1906, Serial No.

Continued on Page 17.



Figure 5

diamond. Sixteen ribs are aligned on the outer skirt. **Figure 4** has a picture of the front.

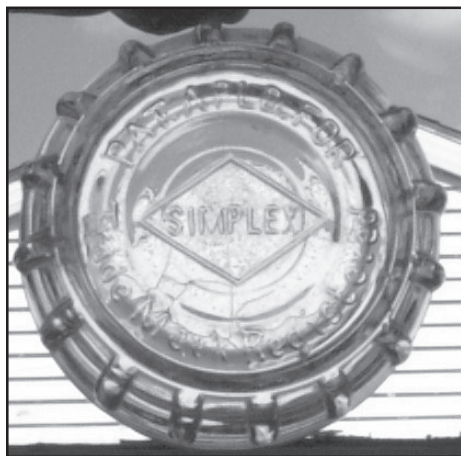


Figure 4

Looking at the Perfection logo, the diamond is $\frac{7}{8}$ th of an inch tall and $1\frac{3}{16}$ th inches wide. This would give it a small designation.

Capital letters embossed on the top surface are $\frac{3}{16}$ th of an inch in height. The

cursive ones are slight smaller at $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch. A capital V is the middle component of the character M in the word SIMPLEX. The bottom edge of this example of closure is rounded. It has an inner diameter of $2\frac{5}{16}$ th inches which means it closes a fourteen, sixteen or eighteen ounce packing container.

Using my self-developed methodology, a catalog listing for this pattern of glass cap would be as follows: II - 7.2.3.2 - a.3.b.3.c.2.d.1.e.16.f.2.

Could There Be More?

I think the answer to this self-posed question is yes. Surely we can't have exhausted the possibilities for this sealer at this early date. With more searching, I'm optimistic that over time other varieties will be discovered and reported via this venue. Can you help me increase our file of information about this fascinating all glass closure?

BLB

Endnotes

¹ *Cataloging Process for the Fenn-Designed, 1904 Patented, Screw Cap*, Barry L. Bernas, *The Guide To Collecting Fruit Jars Fruit Jar Annual Volume 10 - 2005*, Jerome J. McCann, 5003 W. Berwyn Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60630-1501, pgs. 4-20.

² *Perfection Glass Company, One of Many Glass Houses in Washington, Pennsylvania*, Barry L. Bernas, 239 Ridge Avenue, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 17325, pg. VIII. In this book, I renamed the Flaccus-like model. Its new moniker is Flaccusque.

³ *The First SIMPLEX Screw Cap*, Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles and Extras*, Winter 2006, pgs. 30-31.

An Unlikely Find

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311,904. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Feb. 12, 1907. No. 843,740.

⁸ The other less frequently seen model has the phrase - WARM SLIGHTLY TO SEAL OR UNSEAL - embossed in capital letters around the edge of the outer top surface of the cover. Of course, in the center of this instruction is - PAT'D OCT 24 1905 - on three separate lines.

⁹ *The Standard Fruit Jar Reference*, Dick Roller, Acorn Press, Paris, Illinois, 1983, pgs. 281, 348 and 417; *The Fruit Jar Works*

Volume II, Alice Creswick, published by Douglas M. Leybourne, Jr., North Muskegon, Michigan, 1995, pg. 102, 126 and 147; *The Collector's Guide to Old FRUIT JARS Red Book 9*, Douglas M. Leybourne, Jr., North Muskegon, Michigan, 2001, pgs. 307, 360 and 404; and *A Collectors' Manual FRUIT JARS*, Julian Harrison Toulouse, Thomas Nelson & Sons, Camden New Jersey and Everybodys Press, Hanover, Pennsylvania, 1969, pg. 301.

¹⁰ *Another Glass Cap and Jar Inspired by William B. Fenn*, Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles*

and Extras, Spring 2006, pgs 54-55 and 57.

¹¹ *More On The Federal Jar*, Dick Roller, *Fruit Jar Newsletter*, 607 Driskell Street, Paris, Illinois 61944, pg. 905 and *Fruit Jar Rambles*, Tom Caniff, *Antique Bottle & Glass Collector*, June 2004, pgs 6-7.

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