

Fislerville jar is filled with New Jersey history...

You want Moore information? Read this!

Notes assembled by Ralph Finch

Near the end of last January, Greg Spurgeon's auction house, called North American Glass, offered a variety of great jars, and we've picked one to take a close look at, Lot 139. In the catalog (edited) it was described as:

A quart "JOHN MOORE FISLERVILLE" (Reverse) "J B WILSON'S AIR-TIGHT JAR." Aquamarine. Original small mouth glass lid with "JUNE 20, 1861" patent date (as differentiated from the later date of "Dec 3 1861" found on all other Moore jars). Some light haze. Area of chipping on the mouth (due to the design of the closure, with the stopper seating deeply into the mouth, these were prone to prying chips on the lip). Circa 1861.

The winning bid was \$1,450, with 14 bids.

Now, much of what we collected has moved around over the last 180-or-so years as "caretakers" change. This jar was made in Fislerville (now Clayton), New Jersey. Perhaps it has moved around the country, but—for now—is back in New Jersey, only about 67 miles from where it was made. So, in 160 years, it moved like a glass turtle.

Greg recently added:

"Joseph B. Wilson of Williamstown, N.J., obtained two patents relating to fruit jar closure mechanisms; the first being U.S. Patent 805 on June 20, 1861, and the second being 33,870, issued on Dec. 3 of that same year. The first patent was for an elaborate



metal stopper assembly, which was designed to fit into the channeled neck of a specially-designed glass jar. No examples of this jar or stopper are known to exist today.

The second patent (Dec 3, 1861) was assigned jointly to both Mr. Wilson and to the glass manufacturer John M. Moore of Fisler-ville, N.J. This second design was for a glass lid and cast iron yoke clamp closure assembly, the one that collectors today know as the familiar “Moore’s-style” closure.

The subject jar, embossed on the reverse with the J. B. Wilson name, is the only jar in the Moore jars series to cite Wilson’s name on the jar or closure. The glass lid on this jar also retains the June 20, 1861 patent date. It’s unclear why this earlier patent date was embossed on the glass lid since it was for a completely different closure—one that did not utilize a glass lid in its design. The June date might have simply been used in error.

The John M. Moore – J B Wilson embossed jar from the auction is known in both quart and half-gallon sizes. Both are rare. This is the only Moore’s jar with any embossed lettering on the back-side and is believed to be the first version produced in this iconic series of jars.

I found patent drawings and specifications for the June 20, 1861 metal stopper jar, with no examples known and drawings and patent specifications for the Dec 3, 1861 (glass lid & yoke clamp) patent. [Editor note: not included in article but available online]

Following the early, apparently briefly-made “JB WILSON” version of the jar, we know that the more familiar “John M Moore / Fisler-ville” and “Moore’s Patent” series of jars, which continued to utilize the same basic glass lid and yoke clamp design were much more successful. These jars were made at Moore’s Fisler-ville (renamed Clayton in 1867) N.J. glasshouse over an extended number of years, and in a variety of embossing variations, mouth sizes, and volume capacities.

Later, Jar King Jerry McCann of Chicago added this comment:

“I will think about the Wilson Airtight Jar—so rare a group of jars that they are not seen at jar shows, except for South Jersey collectors like Jeff Vanaman, not usually found in collections. I do not have an example in my collection.”

Here is a bit more history, much edited from the poorly written book by Juneanne Wescoat Glicks, *They Blew Glass and The Recorded Businesses of Clayton Township*.



Jacob P. Fisler (1789-1868)

Fisler Town was named after the Fisler family, which had settled in the area in 1753. By the early part of the 19th century, they owned most of the land in that part of Franklin Township, Gloucester County. The Fislers operated two sawmills there. One was Scotland Run (now Wilson Lake), and the other was Still Run (now Silver Lake). There, they produced lumber. In that early time, prior to 1850, Fisler Town had no other businesses. Most all of its three saw mills sold their lumber to surrounding towns.

Fisler Town was situated three miles south of Glassboro and six miles north of Malaga. Both towns had thriving glass factories; Fisler Town being in the middle of the two, was not unfamiliar with the growing glass industry. In approximately 1849, the first glass factory was being built, and in 1850 it was in full blast. Jacob P. Fisler and Benjamin Becket were partners. They were listed in the 1850 U.S. census as glass manufacturers and dealers making hollowware. Benjamin Becket also was listed as a dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, and Variety. The glassworks also had a blacksmith named John Heritage.

At this time, Fisler Town was renamed Fisler-ville. The new glass factory carried the same name. Fisler-ville Glass Works made various bottles, jars, and vials and is credited with making one version of the famous Jenny Lind historical flask with the glass factory’s name embossed on one side.

On August 17th, 1852, Benjamin Becket sold his share of the glass factory to Edwin P. Bacon; therefore, in



1852, the glassworks was renamed Fisler, Bacon & Co. however it was still referred to as Fislerville for many more years to come. Unfortunately, not three years later, on Aug. 31, 1855, Edwin Bacon died in a train accident in Burlington. He was 37.

Due to financial difficulty and the untimely death of Edwin Bacon, John M. Moore took over ownership of the failing Fislerville Glass Works in 1856. John Moore was not unfamiliar with glass factory operations, having been involved in several other glassmaking ventures in Millville. (At this time, the history of glassmaking in Fislerville becomes too vast and complex to cover in a short article. I will briefly cover some of the more important acquisitions and company name changes.)

Over the next ten years, John M. Moore was very much involved in buying tracts of land around the surrounding areas for his growing businesses. In 1858, because of the considerable growth in population and industry, the New Jersey Legislature passed an act to create a new township. It included Fislerville, Glassboro, Union (Aura), Hardingville, and Fries Mills. The newly created township was named Clayton Township.

In 1867, Fislerville was officially renamed Clayton. In October 1863, the glassworks in Fislerville became Moore Brothers & Co., also known as the Clayton Glass Works. Still, it was referred to as Fislerville Glass Works by most until much later. Over the next 13 years, the Moore family had bought and sold land, gained and lost partners, and by 1876 the glassworks had grown, covering an area of 15 acres. This included four large glass factories producing all sorts of bottles. Within this large area, there was a gristmill, a sawmill, a machine shop, a carpenter shop, five immense warehouses for storing the manufactured stock, large elevated coal bins, and a railroad track that ran entirely through the grounds, as well as every necessary auxiliary to one of the most extensive and best-arranged glassworks in the Union. There was a general store and an attached office building. Moore Brothers employed 400 men in 1880 with 100 tenant houses. The Moore Brothers closed its doors just before World War 1.

In 1880, Dr. Charles Fisler, Henry, and Walter Morgan formed another glass factory at the North end of Clayton on a 10-acre piece of land with its own steam mill, machine shop, packing house, office, and a large store. Several years after, Henry Morgan withdrew, and soon after that, the new glassworks was renamed F. M. Pierce Co.

In 1927, three brothers opened yet another glass factory in Clayton. Their father was William Clevenger; he had blown window glass at Batsto until times got tough; he then moved his family to Clayton to work for the Moore Brothers. While there, his youngest son worked as the traditional carry-in boy.

The Clevenger Brothers (Thomas, Lorenzo, and Allie) were inspired after attending the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial and seeing the value of the Whitney Brothers Booz bottle. At that time, it was worth \$160. This, of course, was a lot of money in those difficult times. Being glass gaffers in need of work, they decided if they could get their hands on a mold, they could make their own bottles to sell, so they did! The Clevengers made bottles and flasks and a line of reproduction glass in the old South Jersey

tradition. The Clevengers blew glass in Clayton for the next 30 years. Later the business was sold to Jim Travis; he blew glass at that same location until just a few years ago.

At their height of production, the Moore Brothers and the Whitney Brothers Glass factories dominated, making bottles and glass of all types. There are records that indicate that the two large companies even shared large orders from time to time; it must have been quite a site. Keep in mind the close proximity of the two large operations. Nothing remains except the small Clevenger Brothers Glass Factory and outbuildings.

FYI: Fislerville Glass Works Jenny Lind bottles are available on the Internet for as little as \$7.99 plus \$16 for shipping. The repros are found in purple, blue, amber, and green.



GI-107 "Jenny Lind" And Bust - "Fislerville Glass Works" And Factory Portrait Calabash Flask, Fislerville Glass Works, Fislerville, New Jersey, 1850-1860. Aquamarine.



Moore Brothers & Co. Fisler Glass Works, Jan. 15th 1863. Ten Cents facsimile currency.



Fislerville Glass Works Black Amethyst Jenny Lind Bottle - ebay \$28.50

