



## THE LITTLE BEEF JARS

Collecting fruit jars sounds pretty limiting but still, specializing within those boundaries opens up wide possibilities. One can concentrate on specific sizes of jars, on amber jars, on pre-1900 jars, on jars made in a particular state, or on jars with unique patented closures. There are numerous choices.

One area category that appears to receive short shrift, however, is the small base-embossed vacuum-closure jars that came into vogue around 1900, ushered in by the EASY VACUUM fruit jars made to use the July 11, 1892 patented clamp granted to Franz Guillaume and Edwald Goltstein, of Bonn, Germany, to hold on a metal cap.

Figure A shows an ad from the July 1898 *LADIES' HOME JOURNAL*, featuring one of the EASY VACUUM jars with its metal press-on cap. The bizarre thing is that the noted July 11, 1892 patent applied to a three-armed wire clamp that was possibly never produced; no patent claims were made for the metal press-on cap.

True, the little beef jars featured here, and their kin, aren't what we generally think of when the subject of fruit jars arises, but they are basically the same as many of the small jelly jars, legitimate first cousins to the fruit jars. Part of the stigma surrounding these tiny second cousins is that they're base-embossed, and just like the wax seal fruit jars, that makes them less exciting to display. But when you find one with an original label, their history shines forth and their personalities blossom.

Possibly the earliest of the small vacuum-closure beef jars may be the style shown in our Photo 1. This is a clear, straight-sided, ground-lip, 4 1/2 inches tall, glass jar that takes an unmarked, gold-lacquered metal press-on vacuum cap. The

jar's base-embossed PATENTED APR. 10. 1900 5.

But the patents attributed to these small jars are elusive. The only jar-related patent granted on April 10, 1900 that we've been able to identify is 647,233, the Julian P. Lyon patent on which the BALL PERFECTION fruit jar is based, and we see no way that it could apply to this piece with its bead around the top, just below the ground lip. Our photo shows a small piece of the jar's rubber sealing gasket still adhering down over the jar's mouth bead.

The original somewhat-darkened label (Photo 2) reads "Indian Brand Sliced Dried Beef Trade Mark Registered (scene with three sitting Indians in front of their teepees) To Open Puncture Top Keep Out Of Sunlight Prepared By New England Supply Co. Providence, R.I. Philadelphia, Pa."

Photo 3 shows two jars with Feb. 10, 1903 patent designations on their bases. The 4 1/2 inches tall, straight-sided jar on the left is embossed simply PAT. FEB. 10, 03 straight across, above a number 117 mold identifier.

The Feb. 10, 1903 date on the jars' bases is that of a "Vacuum Preserving Jar" patent issued to Carl C. Giles and Granville H. Gray, of Upland, Ind., who assigned it to John S. Giles of Chicago. The patent drawing shows the sealing ledge and lateral wall of the jar finish, against the outside of which the sealing gasket was compressed by pressing on the metal vacuum cap. Photo 4 shows a remnant of the original gasket still adhering to the jar's sealing surface.

**FIGURE A:** EASY VACUUM JAR ad from 1898 *LADIES' HOME JOURNAL*.

**PHOTO 1:** 1900 patent Indian Brand Dried Beef jar.

**PHOTO 2:** Indian Brand label from The New England Supply Co.

**PHOTO 3:** FEB. 10, 1903 patent base jars.

## Easy Preserving Jar

For FRUITS and VEGETABLES



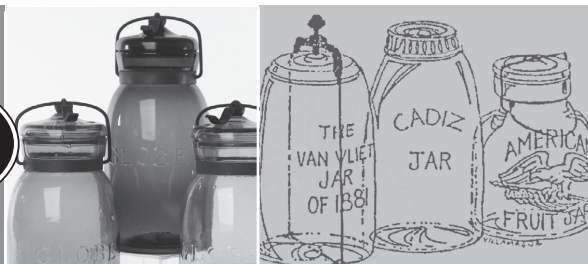
Absolutely impossible for anything to spoil  
Closes Automatically  
Opens Instantly

NO SCREWING  
NO LABOR  
NO EXERTION

Our Booklet, TELLING ALL ABOUT VACUUM JARS, and containing valuable canning receipts by the foremost cooking expert in this country, will be sent free for the asking.

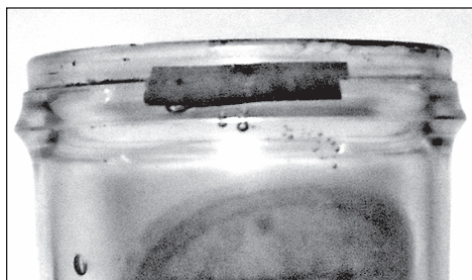
Vacuum Can and Jar Co., 91 Hudson St., N. Y.





# Fruit Jar Rambles Extra

By Tom Caniff — Photos by Deena Caniff



This jar has a label reading “Royal Brand Sliced Dried Beef Packed For The McGowan Bros. Co. Steubenville And Uhrichsville, O. U.S. Inspected and Passed Under Act of Congress Of June 30th, 1906. Establishment No ...”

McGowan Bros., wholesale grocers, had roots going back to 1827, when the business was formed in Steubenville by 28-year-old David McGowan, who had arrived here in my home town from Ireland in 1813. The company name style changed from McGowan & Sons to the McGowan Bros. Co. in 1873 or '74, and the firm, located on North 3rd Street in Steubenville, continued successfully for many years.



On the right in our photo is a clear, 3 5/8 inches tall, tapered, half-pint jar, base-embossed: J.W. BEARDSLEY'S SONS PAT. FEB. 10. 03. NEW YORK. U.S.A. (Photo 5) The unmarked, gold-lacquered cap has been punctured with a knife blade to open the jar.



This jar's label reads, “Beardsley's Junior Acme Sliced Dried Beef J.W. Beardsley's Sons New York U.S.A. To Open The Jar Puncture The Top Or Rubber U.S. Inspected and Passed Under Act of Congress June 30th, 1906. Establishment No. 313.” The “Puncture The Top” advice on the label is one of the reasons that original lids for these vacuum jars are so scarce. These “Junior” size jars were selling in the January 1908 *GROCERY WORLD* wholesale catalog for \$1.60 for a dozen jars; “Large glass jars” and “Special jars” of “Acme Sliced Smoked Beef” were also offered at the time.



**PHOTO 4:** Gasket remnant on Feb. 10, 1903 Dried Beef jar.

**PHOTO 5:** Base of the Acme Dried Beef jar.

**PHOTO 6:** Armour and Cudahy jars with two patent dates.

**PHOTO 7:** ARMOUR AND COMPANY base.

According to the Jan. 4, 1917 **PRINTERS' INK**, J.W. Beardsley's Sons was founded in 1857, “to catch and cure Codfish,” and Beardsley's Shredded Codfish was a big seller for many years. Exactly what name the company was founded under is unclear, but it seems likely that it may have been the J.W. Beardsley Co. at some early point.

As to the dried or smoked beef, this type of product was much more important in the days of early refrigeration than it is now. Vacuum-packed beef in jars or tins would last a long time without worrying about spoilage, in an age where off-flavor meats accounted for much of the popularity of pepper sauce, mustard and other condiments. A circa-1907 booklet claims that, “One pound of ‘Acme’ [Sliced Dried Beef] will go further than two pounds of the ordinary dried beef sliced by hand ... The jar, when empty, can be used for jellies, etc.”

The little PAT. FEB. 10. 03 embossed jars were probably used at one time by hundreds of packers and wholesalers for several styles of food, but especially for smoked or dried beef. Examples of beef labeled jars in our collection represent the Royal Packing Co. (location unknown); Austin, Nichols & Co., New York; Wm. Moland's Sons, Philadelphia; Dilworth Brothers' Elwood Brand, from Pittsburg, Pa.; Wiles Grocery Co., Zanesville, Ohio; and the W.W. Harper Co. of Zanesville. And there were many, many more. At one time, it seems like every wholesale grocery company in the country carried a line of special brands, packed by other companies, but sold under the wholesaler's private label.

**Photo 6** features two jars with lids differing slightly from the previous examples. The clear, smooth-lipped tumbler on the left is embossed on the base: ARMOUR





AND COMPANY PATENTED JUN. 9, 03 JUNE 23, 03. (Photo 7), and its metal vacuum cap is stamped PAT JUN 9 03.

The June 9 patent had been issued to Ewald Goltstein, “a subject of the Emperor of Germany, residing at Cologne, in the Kingdom of Prussia and Empire of Germany,” for his sheet-metal cover for vacuum receptacles. The cover had “a compressible washer or gasket secured to it, rather than requiring a gasket separate from the cap. **Figure B** shows the Goltstein metal cap as depicted in one of the patent drawings. Goltstein assigned the patent to Julius A. Landsberger of Alameda, Calif., who made a success of it on the ECONOMY fruit jars.

The June 23, 1903 patent cited, which covered a spring metal clamp of the ECONOMY jar style, also belonged to Julius Landsberger, but it doesn't appear to have been used on these small, vacuum-sealed, tumbler jars. Aside from adding slightly to the cost, the clamps would only have been in the way when stacking the jars on grocery shelves.

The jar's label reads: “Armour's ‘Shield’ Sliced Dried Beef Armour And Company,” with a band running around the jar advising to “Keep Out Of Strong Light • Keep In A Cool Dry Place.” A separate oval label was added in the back with “U.S. Inspected And Passed Under The Act Of Congress Of June 30 1906 Establishment 2.A.” *HARPER'S MAGAZINE*, May 1907, shows this basic jar with an almost identical label for Armour's (Star) Sliced Bacon, but with an earlier July 11, 1893 EASY VACUUM JAR-type cap.

Armour & Co. was founded in Chicago, in 1867, by the Armour brothers, led by Philip Danforth Armour. During the late 19th century, Armour became a national operation and one of the country's largest businesses. They are also recognized as

the first business in the nation to produce canned meat using an assembly line.

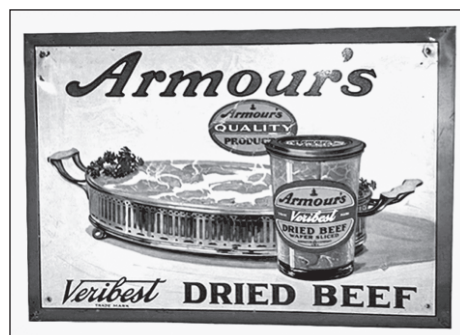
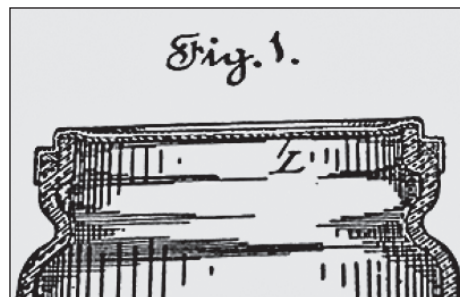
The metal sign in **Photo 8** features a small jar of Armour's Veribest Dried Beef with the 1903 Goltstein metal cap. Betty Zumwalt's *KETCHUP PICKLES SAUCES 19th CENTURY FOOD IN GLASS* (c. 1980) states that the Veribest trademark was first used in 1892, and Armour used the Veribest trademark for many years, on products from jelly to onion rings. This jar's label reads “Armour's Trade Veribest Mark Dried Beef Wafer Sliced Armour & Company U.S.A.,” with “Armour Quality Products” on the lid.

Although sliced or chipped dried beef is best known, and either loved or hated, for creamed chipped beef on toast, it also inspired recipes for fancier and tastier dishes such as chipped beef and sweet potato casserole, turkey scallops stuffed with dried beef, and dried beef with sweetbreads and spices.

Cudahy's 3 3/4 inches tall jar in Photo 6 is embossed on the base simply, PAT-ENTED JUN. 9, 03. JUNE 23, 03.

(**Photo 9**) The gold-lacquered lid is unmarked. Its label reads “The Taste Tells' Rex Sliced Beef The Cudahy Packing Co. U.S.A. U.S. Inspected And Passed Under The Act Of Congress Of June 30, 1906. Establishment No. 19.”

Michael Cudahy had moved to Chicago in 1875, to oversee Armour & Co.'s meat packing plant, and by 1887, he and his brother Edward had formed a partnership with Philip Armour. The Armour-Cudahy



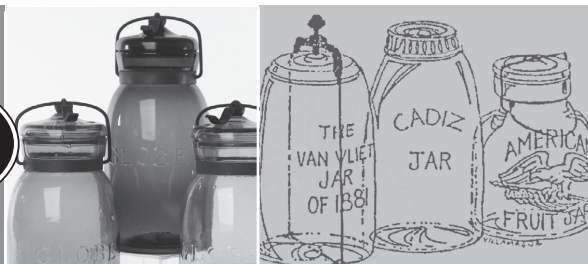
**FIGURE B:** Goltstein's June 9, 1903 patent drawing showing the stepdown metal cap.

**PHOTO 8:** Metal sign featuring a jar of Armour's Veribest Dried Beef.

**PHOTO 9:** Cudahy's base with patent dates only.

**PHOTO 10:** Mohawk and Erie brands of jarred beef from Beech-Nut.





Packing Co. bought a plant in South Omaha, Nebraska, which they operated until 1890, when the Cudahys bought out Armour and established the Cudahy Packing Co.

The new company grew, setting up new plants across the country. In March 1906, Austin, Nichols & Co., wholesale grocers in New York, carried a surprisingly long list of Rex Brand canned meats, including Sliced Beef and Sliced Bacon in Glass. Renamed the Cudahy Company in the mid-1960s, the company was dismantled in the 1970s, after being purchased by General Host.

The two 4 1/2 inches tall, beef-labeled jars in **Photo 10** are both from the Beech-Nut Packing Co., of Canajoharie, N.Y. Both are unique, with attractive, colorful labels and unmarked, gold-lacquered metal caps.

Embossed on the base, to be read from the inside, the jar on the left reads: NO. 63 PAT. IN U.S. DEC. 22. 1903. This patent, 747,450, was issued to William A. Lorenz, of Hartford, Conn., for a “Hermetically-Sealed Jar,” dealing with a flared-rim cap, a gasket, and a sealing seat for the gasket. A jar with the patented cap is shown in **Figure C**, from the patent drawing

Lorenz assigned three-quarters of his rights to the Beech-Nut Packing Co., of Canajoharie, and to William H. Honis of Hartford, Conn. This patent was applied to jars meant to contain many other products than beef.

The label on this first jar reads, “Erie Brand,” above a scene with a canal boat being drawn by three horses accompanied by a handler, all superimposed upon a red Indian shield with crossed bow and smoking pipe. “Chipped Beef,” it continues, “Beech-Nut Packing Co., Canajoharie, N.Y. U.S.A.”

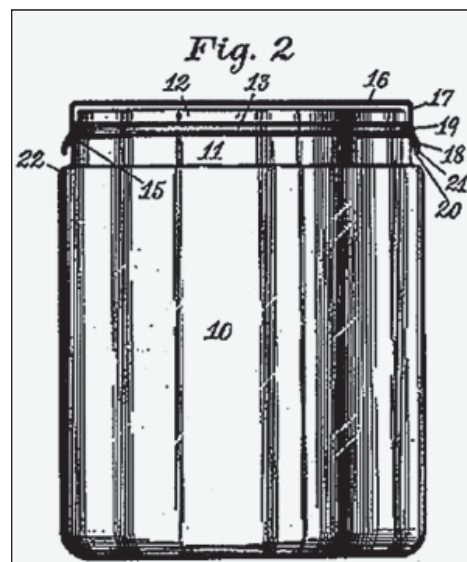
Jar number two, on the right of our photo, has a base embossed in the same style, NO. 63 PAT. IN U.S. DEC. 22. 1903 JULY 17. 1906. The second 1906 patent, 826,104, for “Hermetic Gasket And Its Manufacture,” was granted to William H. Honis, who shared part of the previous 1903 patent. This patent dealt with the process of making “acute-angled ring gaskets” of rubber or similar elastic material. **Figure D** shows part of the Honis 1906 patent drawing

The label on this second jar reads: “Mohawk Brand U.S. Inspected And Passed Under The Act Of Congress Of June 30th 1906 Establishment No. 323,” all above a scene with two Indians beside a teepee, watching a horse-drawn covered wagon, all superimposed upon a red shield with crossed Indian bow and smoking pipe. Beneath this it continues, “Sliced Beef Beech-Nut Packing Co., Canajoharie, N. Y. U.S.A.”

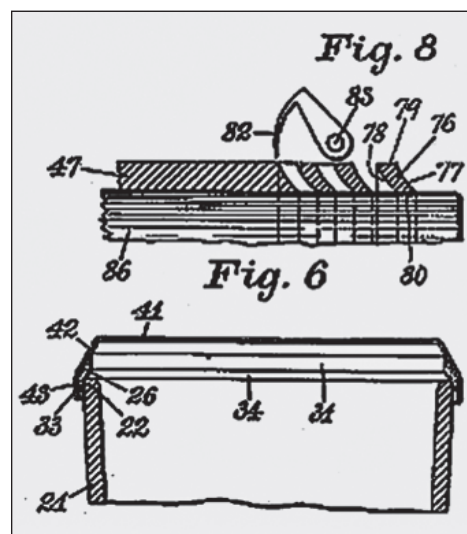
It’s quite possible that the two different-but-similar labels were used to allow competing grocers or wholesalers in a single town or area to carry these comparable, if not identical, Beech-Nut products, while appearing to offer exclusive brands.

Beech-Nut had roots back to 1891, as the Imperial Packing Co., adopting the name Beech-Nut Packing Co. eight years later. They were reportedly the first to pack sliced beef in jars that used an internal-vacuum, cap, and gasket to hold the seal, with no mechanical clamp for the cap.

Of the couple dozen labeled beef jars that we had in our labeled jar collection, we had none with a later date than Honis’s 1906 patent. Later dates have been found on small jars of this type, but I know of none of these with beef labels. But who knows what other small beef-labeled jars are out there waiting, and they do make nice inexpensive collectibles.



**FIGURE C:** Jar and cap from the 1903 Lorenz patent drawing.



**FIGURE D:** Part of the 1906 Honis patent drawing.

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