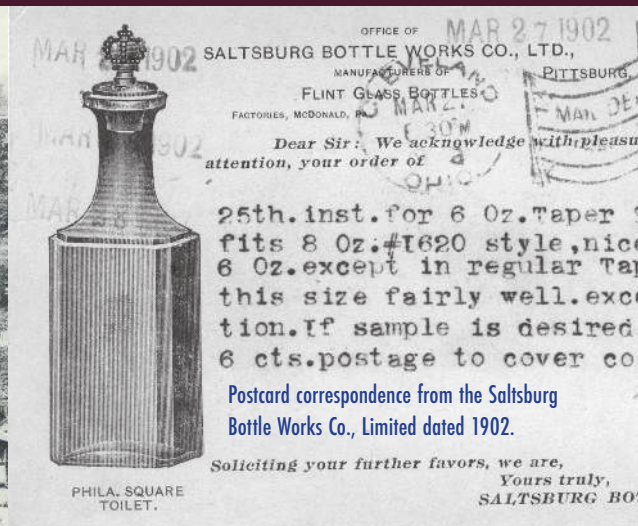


Saltsburg Glass Company, 1880, Saltsburg, Pa. Postcard made from an early photograph of the glass works. Note the single furnace chimney.



THE SALTSBURG GLASS WORKS

by Jay W. Hawkins

Tucked into the hills of western Pennsylvania is the small town of Saltsburg, with a population of under 1,000 people. It would not surprise me if most readers have never heard of the town, much less know that it once had a fairly prosperous glass-making operation.

Saltsburg, Pennsylvania is located in Indiana County along the Kiskiminetas River in the southwestern part of the state. The town lots were laid out and sold starting in 1817. The primary population was initially Scots-Irish, who came to the area in the late 1700s seeking new opportunities. The town derived its name from the salt-rich water found in springs and shallow wells in the area. The area's main industry quickly became the production of salt derived from evaporating water pumped from local wells. In a short time, Saltsburg became a major salt producer in western Pennsylvania.

In 1829, the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal came through Saltsburg on its way from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. The completion of the canal facilitated the transportation of the salt to Pittsburgh and other cities farther downriver. The canal remained operational from that point until the Western Pennsylvania Railroad Company completed tracks through the town in September 1864.

In 1880, a new glass operation was started called the Saltsburg Glass Company, Ltd., which lasted until 1890. About 1890, the company name changed to the Saltsburg Bottle Works Company, Ltd., and remained so until 1903, when they became the Saltsburg Flint Glass Company. This name stayed as such until the Tibby Brothers from nearby Sharpsburg started operating the glass works.

The fuel for the glassworks was natural gas (*Walkenshaw*, 1939), but it is unclear if they started as a gas-fired glassworks or were converted later. By 1885, the factory was converted to a black glass factory. They reportedly used a slate or "steatite" instead of sand to manufacture the black glass (*Crockery & Glass Journal*, June 25, 1885).

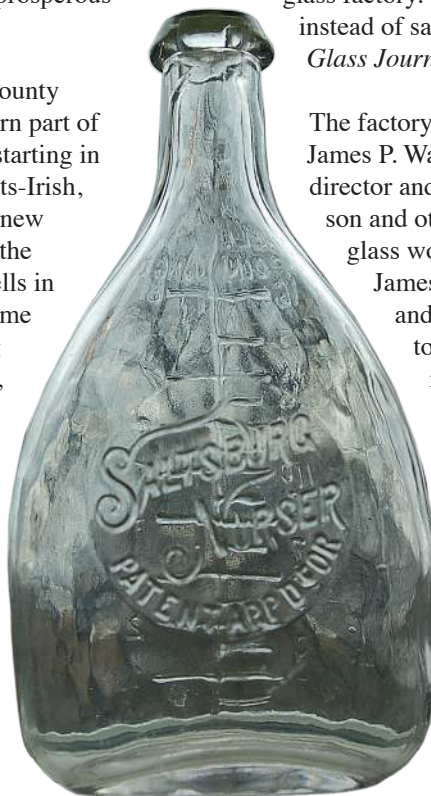
The factory was put up for sale in January 1888. In 1889, James P. Watson became the main stockholder, leading director and treasurer in the new Saltsburg Glass Co. Watson and others bought the old Saltsburg Glass Co. and glass works in November of that year (*Wiley*, 1891).

James Watson immediately enlarged the glassworks and made several other significant improvements to increase productivity. With Watson's involvement, the Saltsburg Glass Co. began producing large volumes of prescription ware and a broad array of flint prescription bottles and ware with 75 employees. The glassworks employed 80 hands within one year, 21 of whom were skilled glassblowers (*Leach*, 1899).

In 1890, the name of the company operating the glassworks was called the Saltsburg Bottle Works Co., Ltd., and was listed as employing about 60 hands. The glassworks consisted of a single-furnace factory that fired a maximum of 10 pots. They also

maintained Pittsburgh offices from at least 1890 through 1902. The name was changed again on

September 11, 1903, with the incorporation of the Saltsburg Flint Bottle Co. At that time, they were employing 50 glass blowers. The factory was idled in 1906 and remained as such until 1907. The Tibby Brothers of Sharpsburg, near Pittsburgh, began operating the factory in 1907 (*Stephenson*, 1899). It appears that the Tibby Brothers only briefly operated this factory, probably for less than one year.

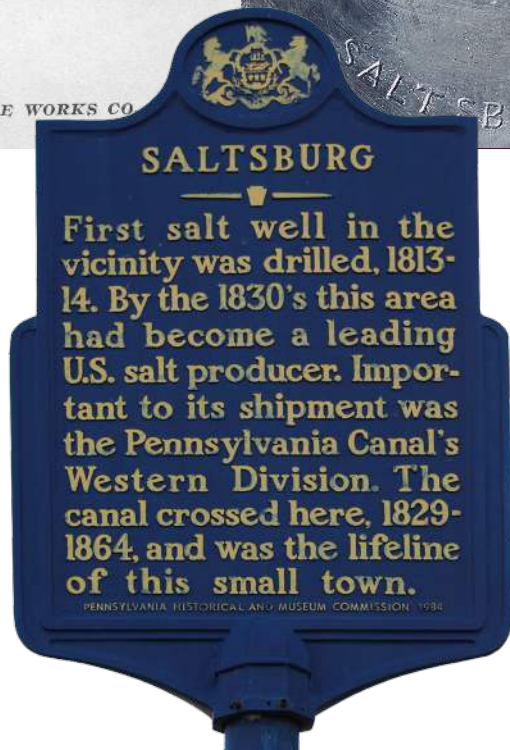


Handblown Saltsburg Nurser bottle.

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BOTTLE WORKS CO



[Above] SALTSBURG GLASS CO. LIMITED SALTSBURG PA. PATD SEPT 25TH 1883 embossed on the bottom of a black glass straight-sided bowl made from using slate in the glass batch.

[Left] Saltsburg historical marker.



THE QUAKER CITY OVAL is the prettiest and most serviceable prescription vial ever put upon the market, and is sure to prove an advertisement for any druggist using it.

In our factories, located at McDonald, Pa., we use only natural gas fuel in the manufacture of druggists' glassware, which insures a product free from smoke and dust.

Send for illustrated catalogue showing lettered prescription vials, bottles for toilet waters and tooth powders, perfumers' ware, screw-cap petrolatum jars, screw-cap vials for tablet triturates, etc. A sample of any vial will be sent on receipt of three 2-cent stamps to pay postage.

The Saltsburg Bottle Works Co. Ltd.

McDONALD, PA.

W. W. WOODNUTT & CO., 1214 Arch Street, Phila., Agents.

Exact size of a drinking glass. No. 1. Use the plain Roman number

The Saltsburg glassworks specialized in the manufacture of flint glass prescription bottles. However, an updated catalog and price list for the Saltsburg Flint Bottle Co. showed that they also made cologne, perfume, toilet water and nursing bottles in flint glass. At one time, they also made condiment bottles, such as sauces and ketchups, and pressed utilitarian items in colored glass. They made a nursing bottle embossed the "SALTSBURG NURSER" on one side with volume graduations on the reverse.

In January 1896, the Saltsburg Bottle Works Co. acquired the factory of Keystone Window Glass in Avonmore in addition to their Saltsburg operations. In 1900, they were listed as having a 14-pot flint bottle factory in McDonald, Pennsylvania, in addition to the 10-pot glass works in Saltsburg. By 1902, only the McDonald glassworks were still advertised in operation. The McDonald glassworks were operating through at least 1903.

City directory listings for the operators were limited, but they were as follows listed for a four-year period: 1890: Saltsburg Bottling Works Co. Lim, office 97 Fourth Ave. rm. 15. , 1891: 97 Fourth Ave. rm. 9, 1892-1893: 121 Third Ave, rm. 517. The listings were under Vials and Bottles in 1890 and Flint Prescription glass 1890 to 1893.

Selected References:

Crockery & Glass Journal, June 25, 1885.

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Leach, S.A. ed., 1989, *Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg*, National Park Service, 263 p.

Stephenson, C. D., 1989, *Indiana County 175th Anniversary History, Volume II 1866-1888*, The A.G. Hallidin Publishing Co. Inc., Indiana, PA, 809 p.

Walkinshaw, L. C., 1939, *Annals of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Volume III*, Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., New York, NY, 528 p.

Wiley, S. T., 1891, *Biographical and Historical Cyclopaedia of Indiana and Armstrong Counties, Pennsylvania*, John M. Gresham & Co., Philadelphia, 636 p.



Billhead for the Saltsburg Bottle Works Co., Limited from 1890.

S.B.W. mark is attributed to the Saltsburg Bottle Works. Photograph taken of the bottom of a rectangular druggist's bottle.

S.B.W. Co. for Saltsburg Bottle Works Co. embossed on base

