

Same Old Mould, Brand New Tricks:

How Heisey got the most out of their moulds

Eric Tankesley-Clarke for Great Plains Heisey Club, 2014.11.08

Re-worked mould—A mould that has been altered. The alterations can sometimes be minor, such as to improve the existing design, make the glass easier to remove from the mould, or use less glass. Other alterations can be major, preserving the basic shape of the original mould, but adding or removing details to create a new design. If the alteration resulted in a new pattern number, Heisey usually stamped the new number on the mould alongside the old number.

Examples in this display:

- Two-handled nappy, 5-in.—#357 Prison Stripe ⇒ #400 Colonial Scalloped Top
- Tooth pick—#357 Prison Stripe ⇒ #400 Colonial Scalloped Top (#300 Peerless tooth pick shown for comparison)
- Hotel cream—#355 Quator ⇒ #1469 Ridgeleigh
- Basket—#417 Double Rib and Panel ⇒ #1503 Crystolite
- Candlestick—#114 Pluto ⇒ #1521 Quilt ⇒ #1533 Wampum (large head) ⇒ Wampum (small head) [The small-head Wampum may be an entirely new mould]
- Vase—#1469 Ridgeleigh ⇒ #1503 Crystolite (The Ridgeleigh vase was also tooled to create the candle vase)

Different plunger—Pressed glass requires a mould and a plunger, guided by a ring, to push the glass into the mould. The plunger can have part of the design, too. For example, the Diamond H was frequently on the plunger. Plungers often controlled the seating rims of lids or provided the seating ring for condiment trays, butters, or mayonnaise plates. Plungers could also have an optic cut into them. #1184 Yeoman with diamond optic was made this way. Many of the pieces of

#1401 Empress were converted to #1509 Queen Ann by changing the plunger. The optic in #1519 Waverly and #1511 Toujours is mainly due to the wavy swirl optic being cut into the plunger.

Examples in this display:

- Ale—#351 Priscilla ⇒ #800 (no name)
- #433 Greek Key—The same cover with different size rim created by a different plunger was used for both the footed jelly and the large almond
- #8129 Botanical Waverly—This is the #1519 Waverly plate with the center impressed with either a rose or a pattern of leaves. The name & number are newly assigned and have not yet been published.
- #16 Susanneh—The cover of the hair receiver uses the same mould but a different plunger than the cover of the puff. (The puff was originally introduced as a bon bon, the only covered bon bon Heisey made.)

Moulds in different combinations—

Some pieces of glass requires two or three moulds. Examples include footed bowls and blown stemware with pressed stems. This gave Heisey the opportunity to recombine. One all-pressed example is the footed bowl with a #1225 Plain Band bowl and a #1220 Punt Band foot. Many more examples exist in blown stemware. For example, #3360 Penn Charter, #3408 Jamestown, and #3409 Plymouth all use the same pressed stem but different bowls. On the other hand, #5040 Lariat and #5089 Princess used the same bowls, but different stems. Heisey played mix-and-match with many patterns. #3418 Savoy Plaza uses the same stem as #3424 Admiralty, but the same bowl as #4044 New Era. Blown stemware bowls often dif-

fer in subtle ways, so some that appear to be recombinations of the same bowl with different stems turn out on closer examination to involve different bowls.

Examples in this display:

- Goblets sharing a stem—#3360 Penn Charter, #3408 Jamestown, #3409 Plymouth
- Goblets sharing a bowl—#4090 Coventry, #8124 Knobbed Coventry. #8049 Jay has the stem of #8124 Knobbed Coventry but the bowl of #5077 Legionnaire. #8124 and #8049 have the same stem as #8026 Knob 'n' Navel.
- Mixed manufacturer—#5067 Plantation stem used by Imperial with a different bowl. The mould for the bowl could have been Heisey, Imperial, or Cambridge.

Re-combined pieces—Heisey could create new pieces, even new patterns, simply by adding a lid to an existing piece or borrowing a lid from another pattern. Changing the lid could change the pattern. Several colognes have different pattern numbers depending on which stopper is used, such as the Karen colognes, which had four(!) different pattern numbers, #489-492, for the four stoppers used with them (pointed or flat tops, long or short daubers). The #433 Greek Key butter became a jelly when the lid was removed. The #1205 Fancy Loop mustard took the #1201 Fandango mustard cover.

Examples in this display:

- Tudor—The bottom is the same for the #411 combination cigarette jar and ash tray and for the #413 cigarette box (which is the only cigarette box made by Heisey that is not flat and rectangular)
- #433 Greek Key—The No. 2 two-handled flat jelly is the butter by adding a lid

Re-purposing pieces—Heisey also marketed pieces calling them different things

at different times or for different customers. For example, a #379 Urn punch bowl was also sold as an orange bowl. Large nappies were sold to the hotel trade as egg bowls. The #16 Susannah puff box originally was called a bon bon.

Examples in this display:

- #353 Medium Flat Panel—The same piece with no changes whatsoever was used as a tooth brush holder, individual celery, or small straw jar.
- #1225 Plain Band—These are *not* examples of different pieces from the same mould although some sources say they are. The pieces are similar, but in fact there are at least five different moulds: two types of tooth pick, the toy spoon, the bottom of the toy sugar, and the bottom of the mustard. The mustard bottom is probably the same as the unhandled sherbet.

Tooling—Re-shaping glass after it is removed from the mould but still hot. Tooling may be done by hand or by machine. Heisey used both. One of the most common uses was to form a spout on jugs or creams; a few spouts were moulded (such as the #355 Quator footed cream or the #500 Octagon hotel cream) but many more were hand-pulled. Tooling was also used to flare nappies or pressed stemware (such as #433 Greek Key stemware). This kind of tooling, when an alteration needed to be uniform all the way around a piece, was usually done by machine. Numerous examples of large bowls and torte plates came from the same mould, with centrifugal force used to flatten the bowl into the plate, such as #1559 Columbia, #1533 Wampum, #1637A Town and Country, and many others. It is probably for this reason that these plates were sometimes called torque plates, although I suspect someone at the factory mis-heard “torte” and understood it as “torque.” One of the reasons for fire-polishing glass at Heisey was to remove evidence of the tooling, alt-

though certain tell-tale signs sometimes remain on some pieces.

Examples of machine tooling in this display:

- Cupped foot stems—#300 Peerless (two styles). the #1228 Ringling egg cup is an example of leaving the cupped foot approximately as it came from the mould. When the foot was flattened, it became the #1229 Barnum egg cup.
- #433 Greek Key—6-oz. sherbets in four styles: straight (as came from mould), flared, cupped, and shallow
- Fine Tooth—8-in. plate (#1127) and 7-in. shallow nappy (#1129). Sometimes tooling could change the pattern number. Heisey was not consistent in this.
- #50 Adena—Floral bowl in two styles, straight and rolled edge
- #1440 Arch—Floral bowl in two styles, straight (possibly flared) and cupped
- #1519 Waverly—Both made from floral bowl, a salver (cake plate) made by centrifugal force and a vase made by hand tooling, not done by machine.

Examples of hand tooling in this display:

- #1404 Old Sandwich—basket made from tumbler with applied handle
- Folded plates—#1200 Cut Block olive and #1447 Rococo bon bon
- #1205 Fancy Loop—Square nappy made from round nappy
- #1776 Kalonyal—Three styles of handled jelly: straight (as came from mould), crimped, and three-cornered
- #1220 Puntty Band pickle to show plain rectangular shape as came from mould; #339 Continental spoon tray and one of the bon bons to show how the pickle tray could be re-shaped

Adding non-glass fixtures—Especially in the first 10 years of Heisey's production, there was a lot of glass made especially for other manufacturers who then added metal parts. In some cases, Heisey sold the glass to another company, who then either made or bought metal parts to add to the glass. In other cases, Heisey bought the metal parts and added them to the glass at the factory. It is not always possible to tell which is which except for the few pieces mentioned in catalogues or price lists.

Examples in this display:

- #1280 Winged Scroll—Finger lamp, using the same body as used for the molasses. Heisey did sell the molasses with the metal fixture. It is not certain whether Heisey sold the lamp already assembled.
- #153 Colonial Blunt Panel—This is the same mould as for the #153 tumbler. It is not mentioned in any price list or catalogue, but it has the identical fixture used for the #1201 Fandango syrup which was also made from a tumbler, so the #153 syrup was probably also sold by the company.

Stuck handles and pressed handles—

Handles can be made either as part of the original mould or added to a piece after it is removed from a mould but still hot. A few patterns had jugs done both ways. For instance, #1776 Kalonyal and #393 Narrow Flute each had both pressed-handle jugs and stuck-handle jugs. Stuck handles are shaped and applied by hand, so could be considered a form of hand tooling. They are nearly always plain, with a large attachment at the bottom and a smaller, tucked-in tab attachment at the top. Pressed handles can be as elaborate as the designer wishes within practicality. Heisey handles with angles or designs will always be pressed. A pressed handle can sometimes be made to resemble a stuck handle, but nearly always will have seams still detectable by touch or sight, most

obvious on the inside of the handle. Pressed handles are rarely tooled; #1404 Old Sandwich jugs are one example, where sometimes the upper crossbar is perfectly horizontal and other times made to have a sinuous curve. Heisey only occasionally added stuck handles to change one piece into another.

Examples in this display:

- #1180 Debra—Mustard (with tooled slotted cover), Cream (with tooled spout and stuck handle), Sugar (with two stuck handled and cover)
- #465 Recessed Panel—Sugar (same as ¼-lb. candy jar) and Cream (with tooled spout and stuck handle)

Miscellaneous techniques—Heisey had other ways to change one piece into another or one pattern into another. Some of these techniques were used only once or twice for production items.

Examples in this display:

- Former (a simple device for changing the form)—#1540 Lariat 15-in. oval plate became 15-in. oval egg plate, made by placing regular plate while still hot on a former which had depressions allowing the glass to sag into place.
- Bubbles—#8032 Capitol goblet made from #4052 National goblet, with small bubble of air blown into stem
- Unusual optic—#4004 Jacobean with spot optic is #4004 Impromptu. Later, #6060 Country Club resurrected the Jacobean stemware (identical, only name and number were changed). After that, Impromptu was marketed as Country Club with the spot optic (which was either done by using an optic mould before the final blowing or by applying the optic to the hot piece after blowing).

Whimsey, experimental, special order, etc.—Heisey used all the techniques they had for production items and experimentation to get the most out of their moulds. Individual workers would have used many of the same techniques to make whimses. “Whimsey” is an overused and often inaccurate term. It frequently is used to describe an item that hasn’t been seen before or hasn’t been found in a convenient resource. I have seen a number of so-called whimses that turned out to be in price lists or catalogues so weren’t whimses at all. Items that are well finished with the same treatment as known comparable pieces are less likely to be whimses. For example, an unusually shaped piece that is ground and polished and decorated almost certainly was made for sale. But one that is not properly fire-polished, or perhaps doesn’t have a ground bottom when one is expected, is probably a true whimsey. “Experimental” items have also turned up in general price lists. Salesmen or other staff might suggest trying something as an experiment. If everyone liked it and the company started selling it, it was no longer experimental, even if it never appeared in a price list. An outside company might order something specially, but if they ordered tens of thousands of the item, do we still call it “special order”? Technically, yes, but special order is usually used to imply small quantities. Harvey amber is an example where large quantities were made of some items. The #5064 Hydrangea stems for Dorothy Thorpe are examples of small quantity special orders. There are no strong, consistent dividing lines among production, special order, non-production, or experimental items. Generally, unless there is specific information to support calling it “whimsey,” “experimental,” etc., it is best to avoid declaring *why* an item is unusual.