
OUR HERITAGE

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Stiegel glass shards Continuing Frederick Hunter's Research

Excavations conducted by Jack Bitner

First, an introduction to Mr. Bitner and his knowledge. Mr. Bitner was an aeronautical engineer who, at the time of this research, resided in the quaint village of Mount Gretna. Besides his knowledge as an engineer, he had an interest in history and the challenges history offers to uncovering more facts. He also believed in the importance of preserving history. He was considered Mount Gretna's historian. He and John Kendig, Manheim's historian, were friends.

During a two month period in 1987, Mr. Bitner conducted archeological digs on the site where Henry William Stiegel's glass factory had once stood, and we have a copy of his report in our Ensminger Library. Some information from his report follows:

"Frederick Wm. Hunter describes his excavation at the Stiegel Site on pages 176-179 of his book "Stiegel Glass". He did this in 1913, & I was amazed to learn that so far as anyone knew, no systematic digging had been done since! I therefore decided to use his 1913 map and findings as a point of departure.

A large copy of his map was made, and the 26 pits he dug were shown, identified by numbers. These were nearly all on the first 4 lots north of Stiegel St. & fronting on Charlotte St. (see map). This area encompassed the glass factory site.

Mr. John Kendig made the arrangements leading to permission from Dr. & Mrs. S. D. Smith to dig on their property – the 4th lot north from Stiegel St. On April 9, 1987, I began by measuring Charlotte St., &

found it to be 29.5 ft wide, curb-to-curb. Since the side walk was 10 ft. wide, I concluded that the edge of Charlotte St. on Hunter's map coincided with the front face of the house, as he showed the street as 50 ft. wide. I, therefore, used the front of the Smith House at the intersection of their south property line as a reference point.

Since I wanted to dig as close to Stiegel St. as I could, I located my first excavation so that it's southeast corner was 110 ft. from the above ref. pt. & 5 ft. north of the Smith's south property line. The pit was"

Besides having a copy of Mr. Bitner's research findings, we also have information on the glass factory site that was received from former residents who lived in areas where the glass factory had stood. One of our members knew and talked with the residents.

In addition to having Mr. Bitner's archeological report in our Ensminger Library, we also have a copy of an interview with Mr. Bitner related to Mount Gretna. In the spring of 1992, Mr. Bitner was interviewed by Diane Reed for an article in the publication **Pennsylvania Heritage**. The title of the interview is **The Magic of Mount Gretna: An Interview with Jack Bitner**.

Since Mount Gretna has for many years and many generations been a part of the lives of those of us from the Manheim area, we were pleased to learn more of the history of Mount Gretna and to add the information to our HMPF archives. Those of us who have lived close to Mount Gretna have been blessed by the many good times that we've experienced at the lake, the miniature golf course, and other attractions.

Below are shards of glass found on the land where the glass factory once stood. Most of the pictured shards were uncovered many years ago while doing gardening. The large 3"x 3"x 2" green glass shard was found when Mr. Metzler replaced a fence post on his property.



Sisters Anna and Ella Myers lived near the original Stiegel glassworks site, and Anna had a lapidary in the Philadelphia area grind and polish some of the shards that they found in their garden lot. Below is a picture of some of the Stiegel glass specimens acquired from Anna Myers that became jewelry.



In search of glass shards.

HMPF recently received a large amount of shards excavated from the site once occupied by the American Flint Glass Manufactory. The excavation took place years ago. Many different objects were discovered, but not the two shards sought. The excavation produced glass shards in shades of green, a few pieces of blue, pieces of the clay pots in which batches of glass were developed, and bricks used to form the furnaces needed to melt material into glass. A number of items show molten glass had been dropped or splashed on them. One unusual item found among the excavated material is a small 18th-century copper and brass clothing button. HMPF received the shards through the support of member Steve Michael and his brother, Dan Michael.

The following is some of what was excavated:

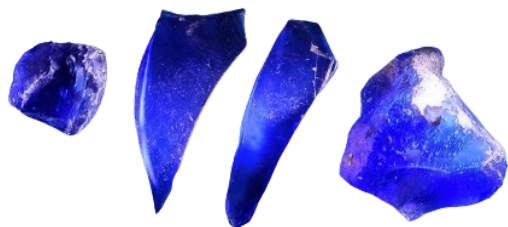


Pieces of bricks and pottery, all with glass deposits on them.

Believed to be a piece from a clay furnace pot in which glass mixtures were made. The 3 x 2½" specimen has a thin coating of glass.



Shards of glass.



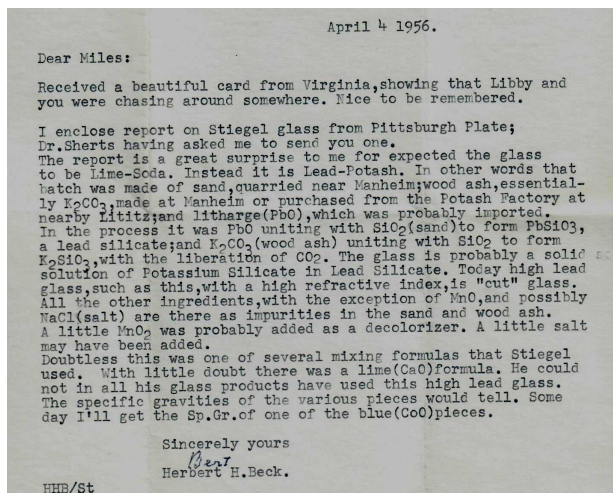
11/16" dia.

5 layers fused together, 1½ x 1¾
Perhaps windowpane glass scrap.

Annualizing Stiegel Glass Fragments

Through the collaboration of Dr. Herbert H. Beck, Director of Antiquities, Franklin & Marshall College; Dr. J. Harvey Sherts; H. W. V. Williams; and Miles Keiffer, the research division of Pittsburgh Plate Glass analyzed Stiegel glass fragments and provided a report on their findings.

The laboratory report contains 4 pages and 20 photographs. It might be the first and only annalist of fragments from the Stiegel Glass Factory site.

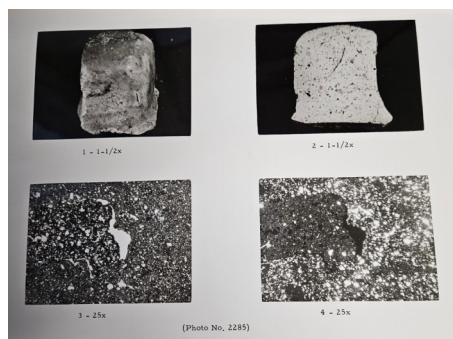


PITTSBURGH PLATE GLASS COMPANY GLASS DIVISION RESEARCH LABORATORIES

RESEARCH REPORT

REFRACTORIES FROM OLD STIEGEL
GLASS FACTORY

By
H. W. V. Willems



The full report is in HMPF's Ensminger Library

The following article appeared in the July 2011 issue of *Our Heritage*, and it seems appropriate to include the information with this issue.

The Stiegel Glass House

The red brick building was at the corner of Charlotte and Stiegel Streets. The glass house was built in the form of a dome. It is stated that from the ground to the cupola, which surmounted the building, was over one hundred feet high. It has also been told that it was large enough to drive a sixhorse team in, turn around, and drive out again. In 1765 there were 35 glass blowers employed by Mr. Stiegel.

The following is a list of Stiegel Glass, probably an inventory, or perhaps a part of one, of the pieces on hand in the stock of the Manheim factory at a certain unstated time. Part of this inventory or list is in Stiegel's own handwriting. Quoting from R. M. Knittle's book, "Early American Glass", page 140:

Quart Decanters, molded	923
Quart Decanters, plain	1968
Pint Decanters, plain	6374
Half Pint Decanters, plain	3319
Tall Salts	757
Beer Glasses	32
Sugar Bowls and cover	312
Pocket Bottles	6214
Cream Jugs	2057
Sundry large Tumblers	29
Pint Tumblers	3153
Half Pint Tumblers	8900
Gill Tumblers	4470
Half Gill Tumblers	2
Half Gal. Tumblers	3
Quart Mugs and Bowls	527
Pint Mugs and Bowls	1387
Half Pint Mugs	940
Half Pint Cans	475
Large Glasses	29
Salts	301
Plain Salts	508
Common Salts	5748
China Salts	207
Salts with feet	585
Candle Sticks	4
Vinegar Cruets	791
Smelling Bottles	585

Fine Wine Glasses	223
Plain Wine Glasses	5648
Bulbed Glasses	77
Phials	6318
Glasses	3
Free Masons	2
Junk Bottles	345
Toys	251
Mustard Bottles	1354
Fine Water Glasses	24
Fine Beer Glasses	48
Mustard Pots	11522
Pocket Bottles	292
Junk Stand and Glasses	130
Blue Flower Jars	3

It is known that Stiegel produced glass of many different colors, perhaps as many as fifteen. The following are some of the colors: light sea-green, Nile green, cobalt blue, sky blue, emerald green, olive green, olive brown, dark red-brown, amethyst, purple, rose, pale amber and canary.

Below are some small specimens of ground and polished shards of Stiegel glass found at the glass factory site by Anna Balmer Myers and her sister Ella Balmer Myers.

Anna Balmer Myers gave the small card, seen here, with each polished shard. The card states: "This gem was cut from glass excavated on the site of the Stiegel glassworks, Manheim, Pa." Anna Balmer Myers

