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*The Role of Women
in the Sandwich Glass Industry*



Cover and above: Photograph of women decorators at the Boston & Sandwich Glass Company, 1885. Front row, left to right: Nell Kelleher, Mary Swann, Mary Kelleher, and Mame Dillaway. Back row: Annie Chamberlain, Lina Chamberlain, Belle Turpie, Nina Fuller, Margaret Brady, and Besse Skiff.

Right: The Decorating Department of the Boston & Sandwich Glass Factory, 1880-1881. Women in the front row left to right: Emma Gregory, Lina Chamberlain, Annie Chamberlain, Annie O'Leary, and Mary Ball. Second row: Emma Fogarty, Mary Gregory, unknown, Anna McKenna, Ellen Brady, and Annie Nye. Edward J. Swann is the third man in back rows.



The Role of Women in the Sandwich Glass Industry

by Martha Hassell

One of the consequences of the Industrial Revolution in the United States in the early 19th century was the increase in the participation of women in industry outside the home. In New England this development was manifested especially in textile mills, where it has been estimated that women made up to 90 percent of the workforce (Wertheimer, 1977*). For centuries, the making of clothing and household textiles was traditionally women's work; they prepared the fibers, spun the yarn and weaved the cloth. Therefore, when technology devised machines to accomplish these tasks, it was only natural to hire women to operate the machines. There was no such tradition in glassmaking; it had always been regarded as men's work.

When Deming Jarves established his glass factory in the quiet agricultural community of Sandwich, Massachusetts, in 1825, there were no experienced glassworkers in the vicinity. The skilled workers he brought with him from Cambridge and Boston to run his factory were all men.

Many of these men brought wives, and these women set up housekeeping in tenements or houses built by the glass company near the factory, shopped in the company store, and sent their children to the new school in Jarvesville built for glassworking families. The lives of these women revolved as much around the factory as did the lives of their husbands.

The earliest mention of women's being employed by the Boston & Sandwich Glass Company appears in a report by Deming Jarves, dated March 26, 1832. The report is part of a Federal government statistical document on manufacturing in the United States at that time. According to Jarves, five women painting glass received \$1.20 per day at the Sandwich glass factory (Executive Documents, 1833, p. 123).

This rate of pay was very high for the time. The average daily pay for women working in other Sandwich industries, such as tailoring or shoemaking, was 50 cents or less, according to the 1833 Federal document. Girls working in New England textile mills in the mid-1830s were earning \$3.25 for a 73-hour week (Dublin, 1981). The Sandwich glass painters may have been paid by the piece rather than by the day (as we know decorators were at a later date) and may have worked part time. For some reason, the names of these women employees do not appear on the payroll ledger of the glass factory for the years 1835-1841, which is now in the collections of the Sandwich Glass Museum.

There are few, if any, existing pieces of glass that can be positively identified as having been painted at Sandwich in the early 1830s. This makes it difficult to determine the type of painting done at that time.

**For references throughout see inside back cover.*



Above: Ruby stained chalice engraved by George Franklin Lapham for Louise (Elizabeth) Shield, who was employed at the Sandwich glass factory. Museum Purchase, 1938.1.7.

Below: Whale oil lamp with painted decoration suggests the type of decoration the woman painters may have done at Sandwich in the 1830s. Museum Purchase, 2010.5.1.



Reference to glass painting at Sandwich can be found in *The Romance of Old Sandwich Glass* by Frank W. Chipman (1938), which quotes an article that originally appeared in the *Boston Traveller* of July 29, 1831. In describing his visit to the Sandwich glass works the writer states:

But what most attracted my attention was a window, stained and painted in the manner of the ancients; an art hitherto supposed to be lost. Here, however, is proof of its existence in this country; and the coloring is magnificent, the design chaste, and the whole beautiful. (p.121)

Although that particular window was attributed to a “young man lately from England,” the description is significant as a rare contemporary reference to painting and staining at the Sandwich factory at such an early date.

An example of early staining can be found on a lacy octagonal dish recently purchased by the Sandwich Glass Museum. Four of the eight clear lacy panels are silver-stained an amber color. We can assume that Deming Jarves, himself, had a keen interest in staining because in 1828 he compiled a small booklet entitled “Glass Staining Recipes.”

Another contemporary reference to painted glass is found in an 1829 letter to Deming Jarves from one of the glass company’s consignees, Gregory Bain & Co. of Albany, New York. “This painted Lamp Glass was cracked when opened,” notes the writer referring to a protective glass shade or globe. The letter is part of a collection of Jarves’ business correspondence that was recently acquired by the Sandwich Glass Museum.

In an article on Sandwich oil lamps, Jon H. Wetz (1984) refers to early lamps with fonts decorated with painted green leaves. A lamp identified as “New England, c. 1830-1840,” with painted decoration of blue and green flowers, is illustrated in the book by Jane Shadel Spillman (1981) on pressed glass in the Corning Museum. These examples suggest the type of painted decoration the woman painters may have done at Sandwich in the 1830s. Gilding is another form of early glass decoration, but it is not believed to have been done at the factory as early as the 1830s.

Although the Boston & Sandwich factory payroll of 1835-1841 does not include the names of women employees, the ledger does contain the names of several women. These women, however, were not glassworkers, but local women who boarded young boys (often their sons), who worked at the factory assisting the glassmakers. Boys went to work as early as age nine, working six-hour shifts for which they received from \$2.00 to \$2.50 per week. The pay, however, was not

collected by the boy, but by the head of the household where he boarded.

For example, on August 13, 1836, Sally Chase collected \$20 for 10 weeks' pay for her son, Simeon, and \$20 for 10 weeks' pay for her son, Joshua. She also received an additional \$30, a semi-annual payment for the boys' clothing. Sally Chase was a single mother, probably a widow, who is believed to have moved from Harwich to Sandwich so that her sons Simeon, 13, and Joshua, 11, could work in the glass factory.

It is not known when women, other than the glass painters, were first employed at the factory, but it is known that women were working there in 1856. Reference is made to them in an article in the *Namasket Gazette* (Middleborough, Mass.) of July 18, 1856. The writer describes a visit to Sandwich where he viewed "all the departments of the Glass Works which cover some 5 acres of land and employs, when in full operation, between 4 and 5 hundred hands." Subsequently, he states:

The Cutting Room employs 75 hands, embracing 18 girls. Here all the glass is ground and polished. The girls are employed in finishing toys, fitting stopples for perfume bottles and such like work.

There is no mention of women's being elsewhere in the factory.

In 1858 there is another reference to women employees in the Cutting Department that comes from the minutes of the Boston & Sandwich Glass Company Directors' meeting of June 29, 1858. Francis Kern was made head of the Cutting Department and "put in charge of all connected with it," including "the room occupied by the females." (Barlow & Kaiser, 1987, p. 19)

The census of 1850 is the first U.S. census to record the occupations of persons. If women were employed at the glass factory in 1850 one would suppose that their occupations would be listed there. However, in the 1850 census there is not one occupation recorded for a woman living in the town of Sandwich. Obviously, there were women in Sandwich with occupations: school-teachers, seamstresses, domestics, to name a few. Women's occupations evidently were not considered worthy of being recorded by the census taker, which is typical of the general attitude of the period toward women's activities. The fact that no women are recorded as working in the glass works in 1850 does not mean that none was there.

The next U.S. census, that of 1860, does, however, record the occupations of a number of women residing in Sandwich including four who probably worked in the glass factory:

Josephine Bryant, 21	Glass-stopper fitter
Lucy Dunham, 17	Glass-stopper fitter
Anna McLaughlin, 24	Birinisher (sic)
Mary Swansey, 22	Glass cutter

Although the occupation of burnishing could apply to polishing materials other than glass, the fact that Anna McLaughlin came from a glassworking family suggests that she worked at the glass factory. According to the Sandwich Vital Records, Anna married James Shevlin in 1875. The fitting of glass stoppers by women is mentioned in the *Namasket Gazette* article. In 1860 both Lucy Dunham and Josephine Bryant were residing in a boarding house operated by Cordelia Fuller, the widow of a glassworker. There is no information on either of them in the Sandwich Vital Records.

The most tantalizing name in the 1860 census is that of Mary Swansey, who is listed as a glass cutter. Mary was the daughter of Terence Swansey, an Irish immigrant who worked at the glass factory, as did three of his sons. It is tempting to consider Mary as a master of the art of cutting glass, but it is more likely that she was engaged in "rough grinding" and other less skillful jobs in the Cutting Department.

"At one factory in the East, they employ some girls to do the rough grinding, making stoppers for bottles, etc." This quotation comes from a contemporary Boston publication, *The Employments of Women: A Cyclopaedia of Woman's Work*, by Virginia Penny. The book was based upon information the author gathered for the years 1859 – 1861. The section on glass manufacturers has been reprinted in an article by Paul Hollister in the *Glass Club Bulletin* of April, 1975.

Evidently, Virginia Penny did not turn up a female glass cutter in her investigations of the U.S. glass factories because she wrote:

Glass cutting could be done by women. No women in this country have yet engaged in it. It is not very neat work, as the wet sand will of course get over the clothes. The number of straps and wheels is very numerous, and if any women desire to engage in it, we would advise them to lay aside hoops and don the Bloomer costume. (Hollister, 1975, p.9)

There was a long apprenticeship to becoming a master glass cutter, and there is no record of girl apprentices at Sandwich.

In any case, Mary's career as a glassworker was not long. By 1865 she was married to Richard Cole, a glass cutter, and subsequently had eight children.

Since the *Namasket Gazette* of 1856 reports 18 women in the cutting Department, we can assume that there



Melissa Thurston Ellis, who worked as a young girl, in the packing room of the glass factory. In her later years she was Curator of the Sandwich Historical Society. The portrait was drawn by her granddaughter Rachel Kaufman, from a photograph.

were considerably more women in Sandwich with glass-related occupations than the four recorded in the 1860 census. This indifference to recording accurately the activities of women has made the chronicling of women's accomplishments difficult.

In the collections of the Sandwich Glass Museum is a silvered glass goblet, engraved "Abby M. Bassett." According to family tradition, the goblet was a gift to Miss Bassett from her fellow glassworkers upon her marriage to Frederick Holway on January 1, 1861. Evidently, she was employed at the glass factory but in what capacity we do not know.

There is no mention of women glass painters in the 1860 census. In the September 1864 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, however, there is a description of the decorative work done by women at the glass factory. The author, Jane G. Austin, who spent her summers in Plymouth, wrote an account of a tour of the Sandwich Glass Works, containing the following quotation:

The party were conducted to the show-room, passing on the way through a room where a number of young women were engaged in painting and gilding vases, spoon-holders, lamps, and various other articles in plain and colored glass. The colors used showed, for the most part, but a very faint resemblance to the tints they were intended to produce, and the gold appeared like a dingy brown paint; but... these colors were to

be fixed by burning, or rather melting them into the surface of the glass, and this process would at the same time evolve their true colors and brilliancy, both of paint and gilding. (Austin, 1864, p. 317)

In the 1870 census a total of 17 women are identified as glass factory workers. It is disappointing that this census provides no information in regard to the jobs they performed; the occupation of each of the following is recorded as "works in glass works."

Mary Ball, 20	Ellen Murphy, 20
Mary Callahan, 16	Julia Norris, 20
Catherine Conley, 17	Elizabeth Shields, 28
Louise Conley, 14	Margaret Shields, 20
Catherine Fagan, 17	Anne Talbot, 20
Louise Grady, 22	Mary Anne Whalen, 16
Anne Mealey (Maley), 20	Elizabeth Wright, 21
Mary Ann (Catherine?) Martin, 36	
Margaret McLaughlin, 18	
Elizabeth Murphy, 27	

The name of Mary Ann Martin at age 36 is an error. In 1870 Mary Ann was only 14. She was the daughter of Catherine, age 36, who was the widow of John Martin. The census taker either recorded the wrong name or the wrong age for Mary Ann.

None of the four girls listed with glass-related occupations in 1860 appear in the 1870 census with the same occupation. Most of those listed in 1870 were in their late teens or early 20s, were unmarried and were living with their parents. From this we can deduce that factory jobs were held mainly by young women during the interval between their school years and marriage.

Other sources provide clues to the jobs some of the women performed in the factory. Mary Ball, for instance, is listed as a decorator in the 1880 census. Anne Talbot, who was the daughter of glassblower William Talbot, married Thomas Chipman, a glass cutter, in 1872. Their son Frank Chipman states in the foreword to his book on Sandwich glass that his mother, Annie Talbot Chipman, "capped lamps," (Chipman, 1938).

The job of fitting the metal cap around the top of a lamp evidently was a job performed by women elsewhere. Virginia Penny in her treatise on women's employment writes:

The Suffolk Glass Co. inform us they employ one girl in capping lamps, etc. The work affords plenty of air and exercise. Their girl is paid by the day and earns \$4 a week, working ten hours a day. The work done by women could not be given to men. The reason they employ a woman is that women are employed by

others for the same work. Men could accomplish much more work, but not enough to pay the difference in their wages. (Hollister, 1975, p.8)

Chipman also tells us that Elizabeth and Margaret Shields worked for many years in the mold room under the supervision of his uncle George G.H. Chipman. It is likely that the sisters were employed to clean and oil the valuable molds used for pressing glass. The Sandwich Glass Museum owns a handsome ruby overlay chalice that was presented to Elizabeth Shields. We do not know the occasion for the gift, but it was probably an important one because it was engraved with a deer scene by George Franklin Lapham, one of the finest Sandwich engravers. There were female employees working in the packing room, where the glass was prepared for shipment. Melissa Thurston went to work there about 1865, when she was 14, according to her granddaughter Rachel Kaufman. When Melissa's father, Trueworthy Thurston, died, leaving nine children, the older children had to support themselves. Because she took the place of an older woman who performed as supervisor, Melissa received \$5 per week while most of the young girls were paid \$3. Melissa worked in the packing room only a few years, leaving to become housekeeper to the local blacksmith, John C.C. Ellis, when his wife became ill. Melissa stayed on to care for the children after his wife's death and eventually married Ellis. Over the years she retained an interest in Sandwich glass. Serving as Curator of the Sandwich Historical Society from 1919 to 1928, she played an important role in organizing the Society's first exhibit of Sandwich glass, held in 1925 to celebrate the Centennial of the founding of the famous glass company.

In the 1880 census 22 women can be identified as employees at the glass factory. Twelve of these are listed as "works in glass works," three are called "glass etchers" and seven are given the title of "decorator," meaning glass painter.

Glass Etchers

- Mary Cole, 15
- Isabella McNamee, 17
- Hannah E. Swift, 54

Decorators

- Mary Ball, 29
- Ellen (Nell) Brady, 25
- Emma Fogarty, 22
- Emma Gregory, 21
- Mary Gregory, 24
- Anna McKenna, 25
- Annie O'Leary, 21

Works in Glass Works

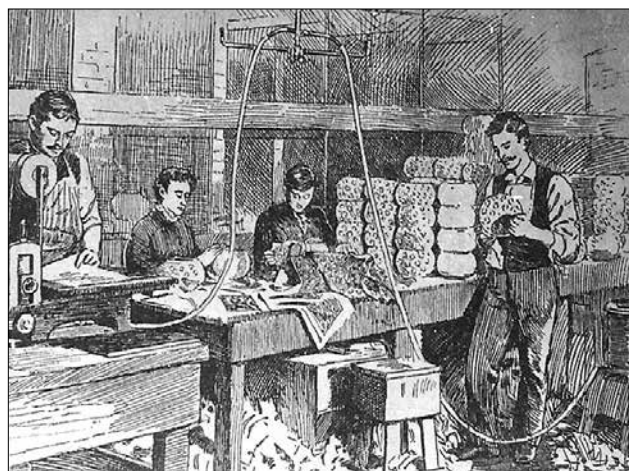
- Catherine Calahan, 19
- Ellen Canary, 20
- Anna Dalton, 25
- Abby Clark, 34
- Mary Fitzgibbons, 23
- Mary Fogarty, 28
- Ellen McCardle, 13
- Margaret McCarthy, 55
- Julia McCarthy, 22
- Margaret Shields, 41
- Louise Shields, 28
- Anna Swansey, 35

The glass etchers produced designs on glass by a method that was less expensive and required less skill than engraving, making it especially adaptable to mass volume items like lamp globes. The etching process involved the use of transfer prints and of hydrofluoric acid, which "bit" out the design on the surfaces not protected by paraffin.

One of the etchers, Mary Cole, only 15, was the daughter of Richard Cole and the former Mary Swansey, who, as a young girl, was listed as a glass cutter in the 1860 census. Another etcher, Isabella McNamee, was married four years later to John B. Louvet, a glassmaker who came to Sandwich from Belgium.

The third etcher, Hannah E. Swift, a woman of 54, appears to be a striking exception to the premise that women were employed in their early years of womanhood. According to the census of 1880, Hannah was boarding at the home of glassworker George Dennis, which suggested that she was a spinster. Research revealed that Swift was her married name; she was married in 1844 to Freeman Swift, a glass blower. Born Hannah E. Lapham, she was a member of one of the most illustrious glassworking families in Sandwich. Her father and four brothers all worked in the factory. One brother, George Franklin Lapham, the well-known engraver, was also head of the etching room in the 1880s. The whereabouts of Hannah's husband in 1880 is not known. Freeman Swift's name is not listed in the 1880 census, but his death is recorded in the Sandwich Vital Records in 1885.

Light globes and lampshades to be etched were often frosted. In her book, *Sandwich, The Town that Glass Built*, Harriot Buxton Barbour (1948/1972) writes about young girls called "roughers," who did the frosting, working with sandblast and revolving wire brushes.



Preparing lampshades for etching. Paper with inked designs was applied to a surface covered with an acid resist such as paraffin.

She describes the work as very dangerous. If a piece of glass was not perfectly balanced, the cork vise would not grip it firmly and it would shatter into a million fragments when it came in contact with the revolving wheel. Barbour recounts the harrowing experience of 14-year-old Ruthie Drody, whose artery in the wrist was severed by such an accident, causing her to almost bleed to death (Barbour, 1972 p. 271).

It would be difficult to verify this account, as the author tells us in a footnote that the unfortunate girl has been given a fictitious name and also that there was no report of the accident in a local paper. On the whole, Barbour's book is based on fact, but she was not averse to embellishing stories to heighten the drama or to using her imagination to fill in gaps.

Of the women who worked at the Boston & Sandwich glass factory, by far the best known are the women decorators of the 1880s. They form the only group about whom a fair amount has been written.

In 1872, Edward J. Swann, a talented artist from England, came to Sandwich to head the Decorating Department. Swann sought out young men and women with artistic talent whom he trained to paint delicate designs in enamel on translucent or opaque glass. As the popularity of this decorated glass grew, so did the Decorating Department.



Above: Dish decorated by Mary Gregory with a painted deer scene. A member of the Gregory family gave this plate to Annie Ewer Rose, who in turn presented it to Mrs. Baer, mother of the donor. Gift: Nina Sutton, 1987.49.

Above right: Emma (standing) and Mary Gregory. The sisters both worked as decorators at the glass factory.

There is a photograph taken in 1880 or 1881 of Swann and his decorators: eight young men and eleven young ladies (see page 3). All of the seven women listed as decorators in the 1880 census appear in this photo. Of the four other women pictured, three can be identified: two sisters, Lina and Annie Chamberlain, and Annie Nye, who married John Freeman in 1885.

The most famous of the women decorators is Mary Gregory, whose name has become synonymous with white enameled figures of children on glass. Although this type of glass has been widely collected as being Sandwich, there is no documentary evidence that "Mary Gregory" glass was ever made at the Sandwich glass factory.

In their book, *The Glass Industry in Sandwich*, Raymond Barlow and Joan Kaiser (1983) address the Mary Gregory issue and write about it in considerable detail. In their research, the authors acquired from a family member diaries kept by Mary and her sister Emma. These diaries cover the years that Mary was employed at the glass factory (1880-1884). While Emma and Mary refer to their glass decorating, there is no reference in their diaries to the painting of children on glass.

On May 6, 1880, Emma Gregory wrote: "We are still painting winter scenes." Almost two years later, on February 3, 1883, Mary was able to write: "Began new pattern this afternoon and think I shall like it – a landscape with a couple of deer." (Barlow & Kaiser, 1983, Vol.4, pp.281, 283) Barlow and Kaiser conclude that Mary's "paint brush brought her fame not for the landscapes and winter scenes she painted but for the children she did not." (p. 277)

Excerpts from the diaries also provide interesting insights into the operations of the Decorating Department. The girls did not originate their own designs, but copied designs created by Swann or one of his assistants. On September 14, 1883, at 2:30 P.M., Mr. Swann gave Mary 15 lampshades that had to be decorated in time for firing the next morning. Working feverishly, she managed to finish them just after the quitting bell at 5 pm. (Barlow-Kaiser, 1983, pp. 283, 294).

It has been stated that decorators were highly paid. They were paid by the piece, however, and the sum for a pay period could vary dramatically according to work available. Mary's pay ran as high as \$32 for two weeks and as low as \$6 (p.283).

Emma Gregory worked at the factory only ten months, leaving to marry Fletcher Clark on November 10, 1881. Following the birth of her daughter in 1884, her health deteriorated and she died the following year.

Mary continued to work at the factory until 1884, when she was forced to leave to care for her invalid mother, her ailing sister and Emma's Baby. Mary never returned to work. Having received a small inheritance she lived quite comfortably, devoting much of her time to singing in a local church choir.

A photograph of the women in the Decorating Department taken about 1885 is in the Museum collections (see cover). Again there are 11 women pictured, but only three also appeared in the photograph taken five years earlier, an indication of the rapid turnover of decorators. Ellen (Nell) Brady is shown in both photos and seems to have enjoyed a long career, as she is listed as a decorator in the 1900 Sandwich Directory. Since the glass factory had closed, she probably worked for Edward Swann in the decorating shop he established and operated on his own.

Annie and Lina Chamberlain are the other two decorators who appear in both photos. Whereas the Gregory sisters' special line was landscapes, the Chamberlains specialized in floral designs. After the Boston & Sandwich glass factory closed in 1888, Annie and Lina left Sandwich to work in the decorating rooms of the famous Smith

Brothers in New Bedford. They did not remain there long, however, because their names appear in the 1900 Sandwich Directory with the occupation of bookkeeper. An interesting note is that together they set up a scholarship fund for a yearly award to a Sandwich High School graduate that has continued to the present day.

The following are the names of decorators in the 1885 photograph that have not been previously listed: Margaret Brady (cousin of Nell), Mame Dillaway, Minna Fuller, Mary Kelleher, Nell Kelleher, Besse Skiff, Mary Swann (Daughter of Edward J.) and Belle Turpie.

Like so many of the women employees at the glass factory, Mary and Nell Kelleher came from a family of glassworkers. Nell was the more artistic and meticulous of the two, excelling in various types of handwork. Two cylinder vases that she painted with delicate rose motifs are still in the family.



In the collections of the Sandwich Glass Museum is an opal plaque with a painted landscape featuring in the foreground a large, long-legged finch. A gift from Louis and Doris Paris, it was labeled "painted by Miss Kelleher." Ann Sullivan, the niece of the Kelleher sisters, believes it to be the work of Mary, because the decoration is not as carefully painted as that of Nell.



Above: Mary and Nell Kelleher in their later years.

Below: Plaque decorated with a long-legged finch. Painting attributed to Mary Kelleher. Gift: Doris Paris, 1986.49.

In later years, Nell was confined to a wheelchair as result of an illness believed to have been polio, although not diagnosed at the time. Neither she nor her more robust sister ever married; they continued to live together in the house their father had originally purchased from Deming Jarves.

Returning to the names found in the 1880 census, several of the young women, including Emma and Mary Fogarty, Mary Fitzgibbons and Julia McCarthy, were living at home with mothers who were widows of glassworkers. There may have been a factory policy to hire such girls to help the families financially.

The youngest girl to be recorded in a census of the period as a glass factory worker was Ellen McCardle, age 13. According to Frank Chipman, Nellie tested stoppers for jugs, cruets and bottles (Chipman, 1938, p.57).

Of all the names obtained from the 1880 census, the one that revealed the longest glassworking career is that of Abby Clark, 34. Recorded simply as "works in glass works," no more might have been known about her had I not received a letter from Eleanor Bowman of New Bedford. Eleanor has done much research on glassworkers at Pairpoint Glass Company and its predecessor, Mt. Washington Glass Works. She had found listed in the New Bedford Directory of 1871-72 the name of Abby Wheeler, occupation, glass inspector – the only woman glassworker in the Directory. Eleanor suspected that Abby came from Sandwich because in 1872 she was living at the home of the Barnes family, who were relatives of the Kerns, a famous family of Sandwich glassmakers.



Mary Skiff, who worked for Nehemiah Packwood's glass cutting establishment after the Boston & Sandwich Glass Company closed. Photograph courtesy of Ruth Horne.

It turned out that Abby Wheeler and Abby Clark were the same person and that her career in the glass industry was both long and varied.

Born in 1845, the daughter of Thomas Wheeler, Abby was first employed at an early age at the Cape Cod Glass Works, the factory Deming Jarves established in Sandwich in 1859 after he left the Boston & Sandwich. When the Cape Cod closed upon Jarves' death in 1869, Abby went to the Mt. Washington Glass Works in New Bedford, along with William Kern and many other Sandwich glassworkers. There she boarded with the family of William Barnes, a potmaker at the factory. Also boarding there was Salmon Clark, a furniture painter, who became Abby's husband. The couple moved to County Street in 1873, but in 1875 they are no longer listed in the New Bedford Directory. Clark's death is not recorded in New Bedford or in the Massachusetts Vital Records, but something must have happened to him. By 1880 Abby was back in Sandwich without him, living with her father and working at the Boston & Sandwich glass factory.

Since she had been a glass inspector in New Bedford, it is likely that she continued that responsible job, checking for flaws in the glass before it was sold or shipped to dealers. Upon her death in 1924, her obituary in the Sandwich Independent of April 24th states that during the last years of her business life she filled a responsible position with the cut glass firm of N. Packwood & Co., the fourth glass company for whom she worked.

When the Boston & Sandwich glass factory closed in 1888, Nehemiah Packwood, who had been in charge of the Cutting Department, established his own cutting shop, first in space he rented on the factory premises and later in a small building on Willow Street. In 1895, according to The Independent (Sandwich) of February 9, Lena Packwood, Nehemiah's daughter, joined the firm as bookkeeper. Other young women were employed by Packwood to clean and polish the glass before it was packed. One of these was Mary Skiff, who was the daughter of Besse Skiff, a decorator of the 1880s. Another was Mary Dalton, whose daughter, Josephine Hoey, remembers stories her mother told about working there.

According to Mrs. Hoey, the girls finished cleaning the glass with wood alcohol and fine sawdust and then polished it with a brush and tissue paper. Mary Dalton was obviously a dependable young woman in whom Packwood had considerable confidence. When the cutting shop closed down for vacation, Packwood gave her a key to open the shop should prospective customers arrive in town to view the glass.

Mrs. Hoey does not know what Mary was paid, but her salary was probably low for the responsibilities given her. Although Mary might not have found much financial profit at the cutting shop, she did find romance. There she met Michael Canary, one of Packwood's glass cutters; the two were married June 14, 1899. As was the tradition in Sandwich at the time, marriage marked the end of Mary's employment in the glass industry.

The names of the women working in the Sandwich glass industry mentioned here undoubtedly comprise only a small percentage of those who were actually employed there. Since the average length of employment was only a few years, many would have come and gone during a 10-year interval between U.S. census reports. Recognition of their role has been overlooked by most glass historians and was, in fact, largely ignored in their own time. I regard this account as only a beginning of the study; I hope that it will bring forth more information on the role of women in the Sandwich glass industry.

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SANDWICH GLASS MUSEUM

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BACK COVER

Top: *Porcelain toilet set decorated by Emma Gregory. She noted the completion of this set in her diary entry dated September 20, 1881. Gift: Elizabeth Cummings, granddaughter of Emma Gregory Clark, 1992.77.*

Bottom left: *Opal glass decorated with snow scenes. Emma Gregory recounts in her diary entry for March 6, 1880, "We are still painting winter scenes." However, Emma was not the only decorator to paint these brown toned winter scenes at the factory. Her sister Mary and Annie Nye also painted winter scenes. Gift: Joan Kaiser, 1996.92. Museum Purchase, 1996.132-.133*

Bottom right: *Opal, mold-blown lamp stem decorated with autumn leaves, the work of one of the Chamberlain sisters. Gift: The Hirschmann Collection and the Shaw Family, 2004.15.26.*



SANDWICH GLASS MUSEUM
SANDWICH HISTORICAL SOCIETY