



## News & Views

# Cake Stands & Salvers

By Don Jones and Danny Cornelius

No one knows for certain when the first cake stands came into being but we do know that 16<sup>th</sup> century paintings show what looks like a metal disk with a pedestal, again in the 17<sup>th</sup> century more pieces appeared. By the 1770's glass cake stands came on the market in America. It is said in 1818 South Boston Flint Glass Works made glass cake stands from 8" to 15" in diameter and later the sizes went from 6" to 17" in diameter.



*Croesus Pattern - note the 'Gallery' & 'Brandy Well'*

It is believed that the use of salvers or cake stands were not originally for cake but for carrying beer, wine or other liquids in pubs. The base or pedestal gave an excellent place to hold. You will notice that several of the "old" cake stands have a ridge around the plate; this was to keep the beer from spilling onto the patrons or the floor. This ridge is called a *gallery*. You will also notice the indentation or well, most call this a *Brandy Well* or *Rum Well*, which some believe was used to catch the excess liquor used when making fruit cakes.

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As mention earlier the ridge around the plate is called the *gallery*. When the glass extends below the plate it is called a *skirt*, and you will find some cake stands, or salvers have both a *gallery* and a *skirt*.



*Fostoria 1641 Cake Stand with Gallery & Skirt*

If you are a collector of cake stands, oil lamps or compotes, you will notice that the base of many of these is the same. One reason was marketing; it was very easy to add another top to a base depending on what item was in demand at the time. In discussing bases and tops, and being interchanged, one good example of this would be the *Ashman* pattern. For a long time many had no idea who manufactured this pattern, until someone found a cake stand with the top plate of the *Wildflower* pattern, manufactured by Adams and Co., attached to the base of the *Ashman* pattern. Now it is believed that Adams and Co. manufactured both the *Wildflower* and *Ashman* patterns.

Color was limited in Early American Pattern Glass; most pieces were in crystal (sometimes called clear), Sapphire Blue, Amethyst, and Vaseline (sometimes called Canary), Emerald Green, Amber and Apple Green. Most colored items bring a higher price than crystal. Many patterns came with a variety

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*Willow Oak Cake Stand in Amber*

of decorations which included- enameling, gilding, ruby stain, frosting, engraving or etching. Some patterns even came with a combination of the above.

Cake stands or salvers are still very popular today. Many still use the stands as they were intended, but others have completely different ways. Some people even turn the stand upside down; usually it will have a skirt, place crackers on the plate with a dip placed in the pedestal. Others will stack graduated sizes creating a tree like serving piece for cupcakes, cookies or other pastries. No matter how we use it today one thing for sure it will always be used as a serving piece.



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In closing, we would like to say, that of the hundreds of glass companies that were in business in the 1800's or early 1900's none are in business today. So if you have a piece of Early American Pattern Glass you have a piece of American history in what we like to call an "Endangered Species". In having the real item, not a reproduction or copy, but the piece that actually came out of the hot mold, handled by a number of people in the last 100 plus years, that has survived just so that you can enjoy and use it, then pass it along to your children, grandchildren and future generations in the preservation of America History.

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Rosemary