

For further information concerning jar collecting, the following references might be helpful:

Tom Caniff. "Fruit Jar Rambles," *Antique Bottle & Glass Collector*. Write to: P.O. Box 180, East Greenville, PA 18041.

Tom Caniff, editor. *The Fruit Jar News*. 6 page newsletter. 12 monthly issues. Write to: FJN Publishers, Inc., 364 Gregory Ave., West Orange, NJ 07052-3743.

Alice M. Creswick. *The Fruit Jar Works*. Volumes 1 and 2. D.M. Leybourne, publisher. Reprint of the 1987 original edition with minor modifications (includes jar manufacturing dates—not a price guide). Publication is currently out of print. Please check your local library for this reference.

D. M. Leybourne. *The Collector's Guide to Old Fruit Jars*. Copyright 1997. A 385-page price guide of over 9,000 jars. Write to: P.O. Box 5417, North Muskegon, MI 49445.

Jerry McCann, publisher. *Fruit Jar Annual*. Published annually. Write to: 5003 W. Berwyn Ave., Chicago, IL 60630-1501

JARDEN
home brands

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Special Jars of the Past



The manufacture of the first Ball® fruit jar marks the beginning of a fascinating history for collectors. **Ball Brothers Glass Manufacturing Co.** (now Ball Corporation) began manufacturing fruit jars in 1884 in Buffalo, New York. After a destructive fire in the Buffalo plant, however, the five Ball brothers and their families relocated to **Muncie**, Indiana, where their business became known worldwide.

The company eventually established itself as a leader in the **home canning** industry. It's no wonder Ball brand home canning jars have been able to maintain a special place in the hearts of many. Today Ball brand home canning jars are still a symbol of America's **past** and are respected for the many good things they have preserved.

Hopefully some of the answers to your questions concerning the **history** of Ball® fruit jars are found within this brochure. We hope you enjoy this brief look at some very **Special Jars of the Past**.



The Mason Name

The Mason name came from John Landis Mason who originally designed and patented a screw finish for a glass jar. This jar had a shoulder on which a screw closure and gasket could form a hermetic seal.

Mason was issued a patent by the U.S. Government on November 30, 1858, for his invention, giving him sole rights for the next 14 years. In 1872 the U.S. Patent Office extended the patent for seven years, moving its expiration date to November 30, 1879. Continuous advancements in the area of fruit jar production helped Mason's jars to become very successful and widely used.

When the patent expired in 1879, various glass manufacturers legally began making jars similar to Mason's. To take advantage of the popularity of Mason's jars, these manufacturers put wording on their jars to show they were being manufactured according to Mason's Patent.

Jar Numbers

The large numbers on the bottom of many jars most likely represent mold numbers. While they meant something to the mold maker at the time the jar mold was made, unfortunately, they were not recorded in a way that makes them meaningful to us now. The numbers are virtually useless in determining the age of a jar.

Some jars have additional embossing, other than numbers on the base, which may assist in dating the jar. Douglas M. Leybourne's *The Collector's Guide to Old Fruit Jars* (copyright 1993) might provide more detailed information.

Blue Glass

Ball Corporation stopped making the blue and blue-green glass in 1937. Sand used from around the Lake Michigan area was largely responsible for the rich, distinctive blue. Although jars in this special "Ball-blue" color are nearly 50 years old or older, most of them are by no means rare.

Patent Dates

The dates November 30, 1858, and July 14, 1908, appear on many Ball brand jars. These dates have confused collectors

for years. This does not mean the jars were manufactured on these dates. The dates represent the granting of closure patents, the patent for the screw closure in 1858 and a modified wire-bail closure in 1908. The jars may actually have been made much later.

Jar Values

Pricing old jars is a function of the collectors' market which sets prices according to laws of supply and demand. If you wish to set the value or sell your collection, we suggest you contact a dealer knowledgeable in old jars or refer to the references provided in this brochure.

Ball® Logo

Not all Ball brand jars have the "Ball" logo on them, but those that do show various styles of the logo. Styles have included gothic letters and various forms of a script. The upward script, which has been continually used in some form since 1896, is the most widely recognized.

Buffalo Jars

- made approximately 1884 to 1886 in Buffalo, NY
- featured BBGMCo monogram
- made in amber, aqua and clear colors
- only four original **amber** Buffalo jars are known to exist
- closure consisted of milkglass, aqua or clear glass lid and zinc bands

Standard Jars

- manufactured in 1895 or 1896 until 1912
- manufactured in various colors
- had a mouth groove that held a metal lid; lid was secured with sealing wax



Pat Apl'd For Jars

- introduced about 1898
- represented entry into the wire-bail jar market
- forerunner of the Sure Seal • Ideal • Eclipse series
- sealed with tinplated lid

Special Jars

- manufactured by 1907 until approximately 1962
- made in round and square shapes prior to WWII
- after the war the jars were manufactured in rounded square shape only (with lacquered-iron lids and bands)
- top-seal lids (glass and lacquered-iron) used zinc bands for adequate closure
- wide-mouth pint jars discontinued by approximately 1959 and replaced by tapered jars

Sure Seal Jars

- manufactured by 1910 until 1922
- Sanitary Sure Seal produced concurrently with the Sure Seal sometime between 1913 and 1914
- "PAT'D JULY 14, 1908" embossed near bottom of many Sure Seal and Sanitary Sure Seal jars

Perfect Mason Jars

- manufactured 1910 until 1962
- most produced in blue or clear glass; a few are known to exist in amber, yellow and green
- vertical grippers added to line around 1933
- fitted with two-piece metal closure by 1934; they also could be fitted with a porcelain-lined zinc cap or glass lid and metal band with jar rubber



Perfection and Improved Jars

- Perfection introduced by 1914 and Improved followed in 1915
- Perfect Mason, Perfection and Improved jars came from a common set of molds
- on the base of many Perfection jars reads the patent dates of April 10, 1900, or April 26, 1907
- half-pint Perfection jars extremely rare
- bulk of Improved production went to the export market after WWI until discontinuation of the jar in 1922

Ideal Jars

- originals manufactured 1915 until 1962
- available in a variety of sizes in round and "square" shapes, with and without patent dates
- made in a variety of colors
- had a glass lid and one of three basic types of wire-bail closures which required a jar rubber for sealing

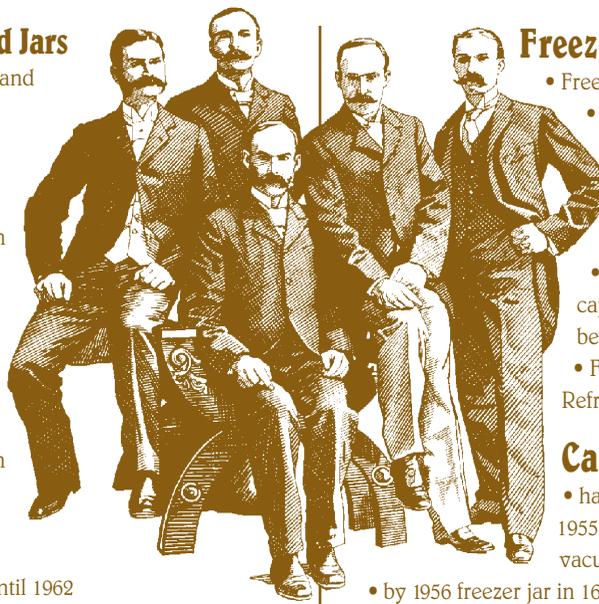
Eclipse Jars

- manufactured 1922 until 1952
- ranged in sizes from the half-gallon to the pint
- had a glass lid and wire bail for closure
- first Eclipse jars with regular-sized mouth were manufactured approximately 1922-1928
- most manufactured as wide-mouth date 1928-1952

Universal Jars

- produced around 1937 or 1938
- among rarest of collectible jars
- no more than 50 ever made
- could accept a glass lid with its wire bail, as well as a conventional zinc screw cap, two-piece tinplated lid, or the old zinc band and No. 10 glass lid
- not known why jars were not offered for sale

Please note that the information listed above pertains to Ball brand jars only. Dates of jar styles and logo usage are only approximate.



Freezer Jars

- Freezer jars made immediately after WWII
- originally designed to be sealed with one-piece zinc cap with a red rubber sealing compound in the top (reusable but not meant for canning use)
- accepted two-piece metal dome caps by 1949 or 1950 allowing jars to be used for canning
- Freezer Jars replaced by the Refrigerator and Freezer Jars by 1952

Can-Or-Freez™ Jars

- half-pint tapered jar introduced in 1955; sealed with a two-piece metal vacuum cap
- by 1956 freezer jar in 16- and 22-oz. sizes available; sealed with a two-piece metal vacuum cap with red rubber compound (not available in all localities)
- pint and pint and one-half freezer jars introduced as tapered jars in 1957; sealed with a two-piece metal vacuum cap
- Can-Or-Freez™ became the new name of these jars by 1958
- withstand heat of boiling-water or steam-pressure canning, as well as subzero freezer temperatures

Jelly Glasses

- introduced in line by 1920s
- by 1930 produced in three styles: tall round-bottom style, squat jelly mold and tumbler shape
- all produced in 1/3- and 1/2-pint sizes
- included tin-lid closure that set on jar (also known as dust cover) to protect paraffin seal
- tall jelly glass manufactured until 1959; unknown as to when others were discontinued

Quilted Crystal® Jelly Jars

- 8-oz. Jelly glasses first introduced to West Coast prior to 1966 and required paraffin
- 8- and 12-oz. Jars began production in mid-1960s in the El Monte, CA, and Asheville, NC, glass plants
- jelly glasses sealed with paraffin and covered with decorative metal lid; jars sealed with decorative two-piece metal vacuum caps
- Quilted Crystal® jelly jars still available

The Ball® Logo

- The Ball brothers' first fruit jars were manufactured with a unique BBGMCo (Ball Brothers Glass Manufacturing Co.) monogram. Several styles of this monogram were used through 1886.
- The Ball name first appeared in Gothic style capital letters by approximately 1888. This style continued until mid-1892 with the exception of a type of jar marked "THE BALL" which was continued until approximately 1893.
- By 1894 the horizontal Ball script with a disconnected underscore showed up in the Ball line. This style faded from use by 1896, however.
- The world-famous upward script appeared by 1896 with the introduction of the so-called "3-L Ball." The third "L" was actually a large loop between the last letter in Ball and the beginning of the underscore. This style continued until 1910.
- By 1923 the underscore beneath the script was eliminated along with the front leg of the "a."
- By 1933 the underscore appeared again. This style of the script has continued through today. The "B," however, no longer has a loop around the downstroke as it did before 1960.
- It wasn't until 1907 that the company actually registered a script Ball trademark even though one had been frequently used since 1894.



Did You Know?

- The idea for today's **Ball Blue Book®** Home Canning Guide was originally developed in 1909 by George A. Ball and his wife, Frances Woodworth Ball. The earliest-known version was called *The Correct Method for Preserving Fruit*.
- This well-respected publication has evolved through the years by including not only up-to-date home canning information and recipes, but also freezing and dehydration information as well.
- After over 80 years in the making, the **Ball Blue Book®** Home Canning Guide continues to be an invaluable reference source for food preservationists across the country.