

# The Morning Glory Pattern

## How to Distinguish the Old From the New

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*As published in the Journal of Antiques and Collectibles, Sturbridge, MA 01566  
Vol. XI No. 2 April 2010 issue, pp. 48-49  
[www.journalofantiques.com](http://www.journalofantiques.com)*

One of the classic patterns of Early American Pressed Glass, "Morning Glory" has been documented by Sandwich glass experts Joan E. Kaiser and the late Raymond E. Barlow as a product of the Boston & Sandwich Glass Company of Sandwich, Massachusetts. The pattern's manufacturing dates are generally accepted to span from around 1865 to 1875, or possibly as late as 1880. The recent discovery of a bowl applied to a high foot, similar to a high foot used in the 1850s by the American Glass Company of South Boston, Massachusetts, raises the possibility that Morning Glory was not made exclusively by the Boston & Sandwich firm; however, it does appear that production primarily occurred at the Sandwich site.

Nearly all pieces of the pattern were made using a lead-based glass formula, today called flint glass, which resonates nicely when tapped; however, some original goblets have been found that contain very low amounts of lead, or that were produced from a soda-lime formula, resulting in little or no resonance. It is one of the latest flint glass patterns, and according to Barlow and Kaiser, seems to be the last attempt by the Boston & Sandwich Company to make a pressed tableware line superior to that of their competition.

The pattern itself exhibits outstanding detail and is considered among the premiere examples of the art of mould making in American glass. A unique aspect of the pattern is the designer's ingenious use of vines that run down the stem and terminate in leaves on the foot in order to hide the mould lines or seams of many of the tableware forms. Unfortunately the Morning Glory pattern was not manufactured in an extensive number of forms, presumably due to the high cost of producing the intricate moulds.

The known forms manufactured in the Morning Glory pattern are as follows.

- Bowl, on low foot
- Bowl, on high foot (open compote)\*
- Champagne (5 in. high)
- Cream (creamer)
- Egg glass (egg cup)
- Goblet (6 in. high)
- Nappie, covered (butter dish)
- Nappie (3 ½ in.) (honey dish)
- Nappie (4 1/8 in.) (sauce dish)
- Salt, on foot (master)
- Salt, individual
- Salver (11 ½ in. diameter) (cake stand)
- Spoon glass (spooner)\*\*
- Sugar, covered
- Tumbler, footed\*\*\*
- Wine (4 in. high)

\*Recorded in several different sizes and raised on three different standards: one with the Morning Glory pattern repeated on the foot, and two different without the pattern.

\*\*This is possibly the same form as the footed tumbler.

\*\*\*This is possibly the same form as the spoon glass.

Forms commonly produced during the period that apparently were *not* made in the Morning Glory pattern include the celery (vase), decanter, flat tumbler, and jug (pitcher). All pieces in the pattern are scarce to rare; the champagne, cream, sugar with cover, nappie with cover, and salt on foot are very rare; and the salver, which is reworked from the bowl on high foot form, is extremely rare or possibly unique. No original colored glass specimens are known.

The goblet and the wine are the only forms that have been reproduced in the Morning Glory pattern. They were both made for the L. G. Wright Glass Company from new moulds. The goblet was reissued in colorless, amber, red, and pale blue, and possibly other colors. The reproduction wine has only been recorded in colorless, but it was possibly made in colors common to the L. G. Wright firm.

While the quality of the reproductions is very good, there are some obvious points of difference that distinguish the old from the new. When first attempting to identify an original Morning Glory goblet or wine, several basic points can be employed.

1. If a goblet exhibits a nice flint resonance when tapped, it is an original. Since the reproductions were produced from a soda-lime glass formula, they do not resonate as flint. However as we have previously established, some original goblets were made from a low-lead or soda-lime formula, so consequently they do not have a flint ring.
2. Original wines will exhibit a short flint ring or ping, but due to the smaller size of the bowl, they do not resonate like the goblets. Because of this, the “ring” test on the wines should be used with great caution. It has not yet been determined if any original wines were made using a soda-lime formula.
3. All colored goblets are reproductions.

The following are specific pattern detail points that can be used to unquestionably identify original and reproduction goblets and wines.

## Goblet

1. Examine all four vines running up the stem on the mould lines. On the original, each vine will exhibit a stem branching to the left near the bottom of the bowl. On the reproduction, one vine has no stem branching to the left at all, leaving a large group of leaves with no attachment to the main vine.
2. Find the open bloom on the lower part of the bowl that is facing to the right. On the reproduction, the central stamen anther on this bloom is much larger than the other four anthers. On the original, all five of the anthers are about the same size.

## Wine

1. Find the open bloom on the lower section of the bowl that is facing to the left. On the original, the center stamen anther of this bloom touches the leaf to the left, and the upper anther does not touch the leaf above it. On the reproduction, the center anther does not touch the leaf to the left, and the upper anther touches the very edge of the leaf above it.
2. Also on the reproduction, the group of four leaves and one closed bloom, located to the left of the aforementioned open bloom, does not have a connecting stem to the main vine below. The original does include the connecting stem situated on top of the mould line.

While there are numerous additional pattern differences, the above points are the clearest and easiest to ascertain. The often-heard observation that the leaves on the feet of the reproductions stop short of the foot edge is an ambiguous assessment and should not be considered as a reliable criterion.

Shortwave ultraviolet (black) light does appear to differentiate between original and reproduction specimens in the Morning Glory pattern. A limited test has shown that original items in the pattern fluoresce a bluish color, including the goblets with little or no resonance, while the reproduction goblets and wines fluoresce a yellowish hue. Be aware that under longwave ultraviolet light, all specimens old and new, fluoresce a strong yellow. Further shortwave ultraviolet light testing and interpretations need to be accomplished in order to consider this designation method decisive.

The Morning Glory pattern represents an important transitional period in the history of Early American pressed glass. The Civil War hastened the glass tableware industry's conversion from the use of lead in the glass formula to a soda-lime based mixture. The Boston & Sandwich Glass Company was slow to switch to the new and cheaper-to-produce formula, and their Morning Glory was one of the last patterns produced using the old method. On the other hand, the design itself was on the cutting edge of fashion and style. The 1870s saw new American pressed glass patterns gravitate towards naturalistic designs in response to the Aesthetic Movement that was sweeping the worlds of literature and the arts. Morning Glory was one of the first patterns introduced in this newly developing realistic genre, and proved to be one of the most complex and aesthetical designs of the movement. The pattern survives today as a testament to the extensive talents of the American glass workers, designers, and mould makers of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## Photo Captions

1. Morning Glory pattern wine, champagne, and goblet. The Boston & Sandwich Glass Co., and possibly others, ca. 1865-75. *Private Collection*.
2. A: Morning Glory salver, 11 ½ in. diameter, possibly unique. The Boston & Sandwich Glass Co., and possibly others, ca. 1865-75. *Private Collection*. B: Detail of the salver plate showing the intricate pattern.
3. Reproduction Morning Glory goblets. Produced for the L. G. Wright Glass Co., ca. 1950. *Jeffrey S. Evans Study Collection*.
4. A: Detail of an original Morning Glory goblet showing the bloom with all five stamen anthers being about the same size, and the intact left stem off the main vine. B: Detail of a reproduction Morning Glory goblet showing the central stamen anther being much larger than the other four anthers, and the missing left stem off the main vine.

Photos by William H. McGuffin, Jeffrey S. Evans & Associates