

Jar 54 Where Are You?

By Barry L. Bernas

What's with the Title?

For those of you old enough to remember the so-called golden age of television, the early 1960s series - *Car 54, Where Are You?* - should be a familiar one. Who can forget the antics of officers Gunther Toody (Joe E. Ross) and Francis Muldoon (Fred Gwynne)? They were a pair of zany New York policemen, assigned to the 53rd Precinct, who, while on patrol, rode in the

"...ever-errant Car 54."¹

What does this situation comedy have to do with fruit jars? The unlikely partnership of the characters Toody, who was

"...short, stocky, friendly, and just a bit nosy..."

and Muldoon, who was

"...tall and quiet..."²

wasn't complete without their vehicle - Car 54. In similar fashion, a short pint and taller quart aren't a set without their companion half-gallon. Many 16- and 32-ounce examples have reported for duty; however, their sixty-four ounce mate remains out there somewhere as "Jar 54."

My metaphor was meant to get you into a pondering mode. One that first wondered what I was attempting to do. But more importantly, I hope your secondary response was one of recognition. If I was successful, then you can help identify those unreported "Jar 54s."

Aim

In the following paragraphs, I intend to discuss eleven pairs of containers for which their half-gallon counterpart is absent without leave.

Most of these jars aren't rare. Some are considered to be scarce by one source or another. All but one set are clear in color and accepted by most enthusiasts to be commonplace, regardless of their lineage. These groups aren't hand-blown. They don't come with exotic sealing methods or in stunning colors. All were machine manufactured over the past one hundred years or so. As with others, their "claim to fame" is the fact that they are missing a mate.

I don't know whether a matching container was produced for these pint and quart specimens. In some cases, a fruit jar reference guide lists an example in a half-gallon size but try to find someone who has seen it. For most of the eleven partial sets, one hasn't been reported. The answer to the rejoinder "why not" could be as simple as the maker didn't manufacture one. Or it could be that one was turned out but not recorded because the jar is believed to be too common to warrant any interest in it. Let me assure you, the examples I'm going to present aren't as prevalent as you would first presume. In other words, they aren't seen on a recurring basis. If you can help get any one of their 64-ounce associates off deserter status and back on active duty by verifying its existence, I for one would be appreciative.

ANCHOR MASON'S PATENT.

The first group carries the front inscription on individual lines - ANCHOR (in a straight line) MASON'S (arched

lettering) PATENT (in a straight line) with a dot after the "T" in the word PATENT. This arrangement has the company name - ANCHOR - composed of either roped or unroped alphabetical characters.³ On the backside of the shoulder seal, clear or sun colored amethyst tinted pint and quart examples, is an embossed fouled anchor. This nautical symbol is a representation of an admiralty style which, in this case, leans to the left.⁴ First reported by Don Burkett,⁵ the 32-ounce model can be seen on the left in **Figure 1**. In June, 1992, Wayne and June Lowry acquired its Toodyesque mate on the right. Was a half-gallon sample ever pressed and blown?

Brockway CLEAR-VU MASON

The 64-ounce version in this set has escaped my efforts to locate it for nearly five years. Perhaps, I'm looking in the wrong places! This apparently mundane article is listed in *Red Book 9* under number 514.⁶ But this Jar 54 isn't round. It is rounded square in shape. The pint and quart examples, depicted left to right in **Figure 2**, have the following markings in separate lines on the front - Brockway (slanted upward to the right) CLEAR-VU

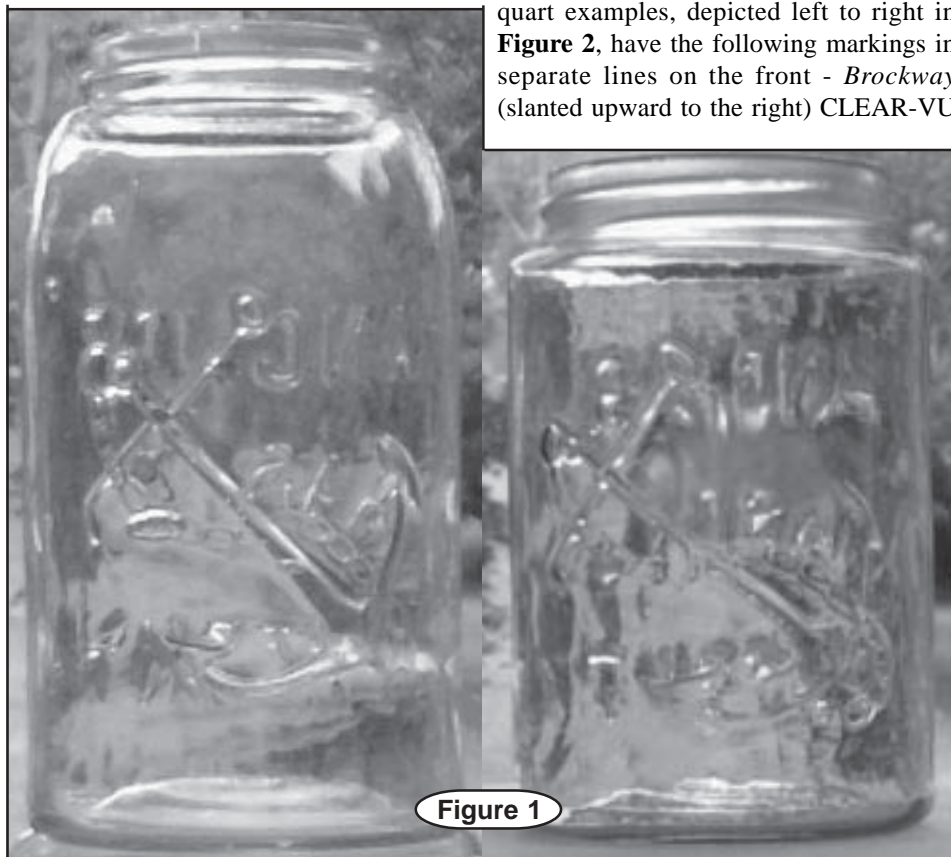
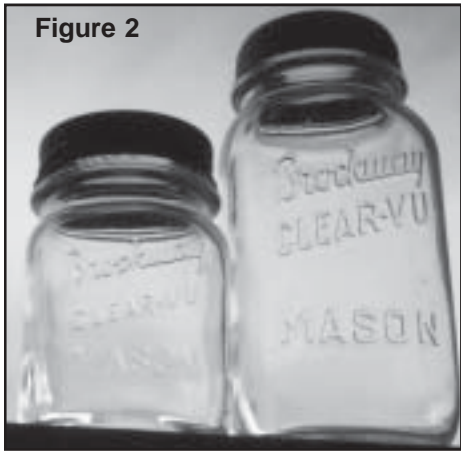


Figure 1



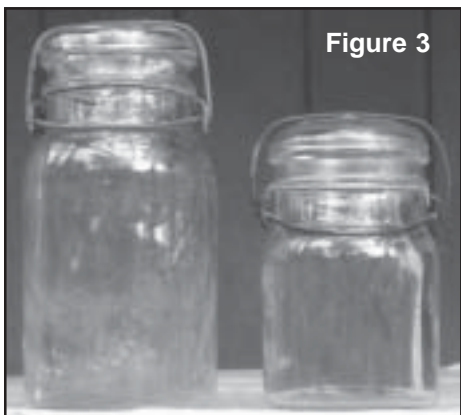
(slanted upward to the right) MASON (in a straight line).

These screw top, bead seal, clear jars have a distinctive rounded square shape to them. Their stippled bases are similar in design as well. In the center is a dot. To the left is the maker's logo, a capital B within a circle. On the right of the dot are the digits 48. Above the period are probable mold series numbers. Below are the mold numbers 1297 (pint) and 1298 (quart). Have you seen 1299? It really does emulate the slogan, Jar 54, Where Are You?

Unembossed Capstan

In May 1926, the Capstan Glass Company advertised for the first and only time a 16- and 32-ounce clear glass set of lightning style, beaded neck, full wire bail jars.⁷ These unassuming packers' containers were unembossed. Seen in **Figure 3**, their bases contained the only hint as to where they were made. Extremely fruit jar-like in appearance, these samples each have a Capstan trademark embossed in the center of their bases. Above it is a likely mold series number while below is the four digit number for the mold. For the pint, 3995 is present. On its four-cup associate is 3996.

With that sequencing of mold numbers,



you would think 3997 would be their missing counterpart. However, that number belongs to a Capstan manufactured half-gallon jar with a smaller mouth and a lightning style, beaded neck, half wire bail closure with half moon shaped dimpled bosses.

It's easy to assume that a sealing mechanism modification (full to half wire bail) was made before a 3997 example of the former type (full wire bail) was produced. This would be a plausible explanation for why no full wire bail edition has been located. But don't be so fast to ascribe to this thought.

I say this because I have a pint-size jar with the latter style of closing technique (half wire bail with half moon shaped dimpled bosses) which has the number 3995 on its base. This means two different and successive closure variations exist for the pint model. Both models carry the same mold number.

If Capstan officials gave their 16-ounce container with the updated sealing means the exact mold number as the one with the older style, wouldn't it be logical that the same would follow through for numbers 3996 and 3997? We have already seen the 3997 marked half-gallon version with the more modern method of achieving air tightness. Where is the other rendition? Is it still out on endless patrol in the Precinct 53? Diggers, I need your help in getting this Jar 54 off the unauthorized absence list.

GLENSHAW G in a Square MASON

If you are a problem solver, here is one for you to tackle. In **Figure 4**, there is a pint and quart example of a clear fruit jar each embossed with - GLENSHAW (in a banner) G (in a square) MASON - on three different lines. Both have stippled bases with a capital G in a square in the center. When you look at their mold numbers,

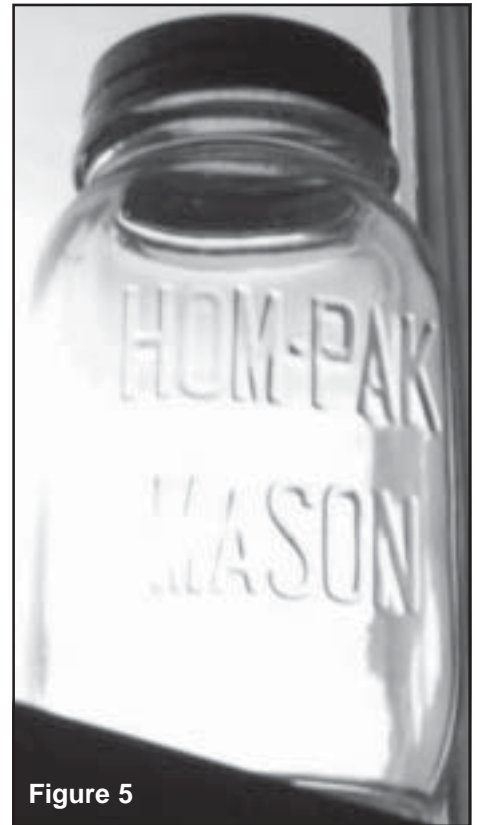
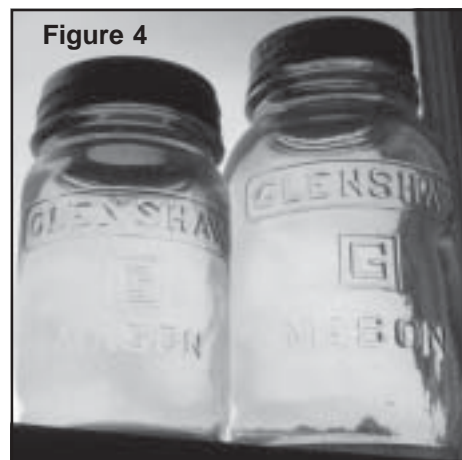


Figure 5

though; you should start to scratch your head. Normally, these digits would be consecutive but in this case they aren't.

Your assignment, should you choose to accept it, is to find out what the mold number is for a half-gallon similarly inscribed home canning vessel. The Toody model has 1955 on its under side. Its mate carries 1255. Find the 64-ounce teammate and the problem is solved.

HOM-PAK MASON

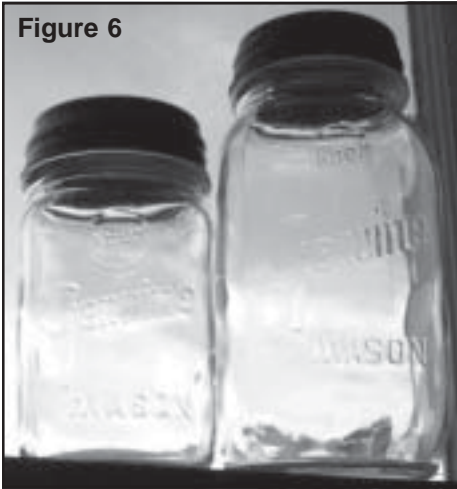
The fifth set in search of completion was made by two different glass firms. Most prevalent is the clear, rounded square, bead seal, four cup model embossed with HOM-PAK (on one line) MASON (beneath on another line). See **Figure 5** for a picture of this specimen.

I've seen 32-ounce examples with the following trademarks on their bases: a capital H inside a triangle and a large S within a keystone form. The former logo was from J. T. & A. Hamilton, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The latter signified the Seaboard Glass Bottle Company of the same city.⁸ Decidedly less available is the two-cup edition. I haven't come across one yet but *Red Book 9* lists a sample under number 1262.⁹

Which firm made the forlorn half-gallon?

Continued on next page...

Figure 6



Knox (in a circle) Genuine MASON

The sight of a home canning container with *Samco (in a circle) Genuine MASON* marked on its front has become a routine occurrence for me. The clear examples in pint, quart and half-gallon capacities seem to me to be almost everywhere I go when I'm "jar hunting." But there's an off-shoot of this style that is the complete opposite in its presence.

Seen in **Figure 6**, the 16- and 32-ounce models embossed with - *Knox (in a circle)* on the top line followed by *Genuine* on the next and *MASON* beneath - are the antithesis of their *Samco* brethren. These aren't seen very often. Since a colorless rounded square 64-ounce *Samco* version was produced, it stands to reason one of

the same size should have been manufactured in the *Knox* style as well. Jar 54, Where are You?

Knox Mason

In the space of five months during 1990, Dick Roller talked about the pint and quart jars embossed on the front with *Knox* (on one line) *Mason* (on the following line).¹⁰ To say this partnership is a scarce commodity understates the issue by magnitudes.

I've been fortunate enough to find a quart model. It is shown on the left in **Figure 7**. As you can see, the shape of this clear, screw top, bead seal container isn't noteworthy in any regard. Some like Dick Roller thought it looked like a modern mayonnaise jar. The base on my 32-ounce specimen is stippled. In the center is the maker's trademark - a capital K inside a keystone outline. Above this logo is the probable mold identifier P-1011. Below the insignia is a solitary digit. In this case, it is a 5. Wayne and June Lowry of Raymore, Missouri were kind enough to provide me a picture and a base description of the pint edition seen on the right in Figure 7. The underneath side of this vessel has a capital K within a keystone form embossed in the center. Directly above the manufacturer's logo is descriptor P-238. Beneath the trademark is the single numeral 7.

Does this set of two containers have a

third relative? If so, its escape and evasion training has so far been superior because it remains at large. Keep a lookout for this Jar 54; it could add to your stash of pin money.

Samco SUPER MASON

Here's another one to keep your eye out for when you are getting dirty rummaging through the box lots full of old canning jars at a garage, yard or estate sale. The bead seal domestic container with *Samco* (slanted upward to the right on the top line) *SUPER* (middle line) *MASON* (bottom line) marked on the front is a somewhat familiar site to most of us. But before you jump to the conclusion I'm talking about the examples that are colorless, read a little bit further.

Coming without the plate mold impression around the word *MASON*, the models in **Figure 8** are aqua in color. Since two members of the threesome have been located, the tardy team mate needs to be brought back home to roost. Don't think the search isn't worth the effort. How often have you encountered any of the specimens in Figure 8?

Figure 8

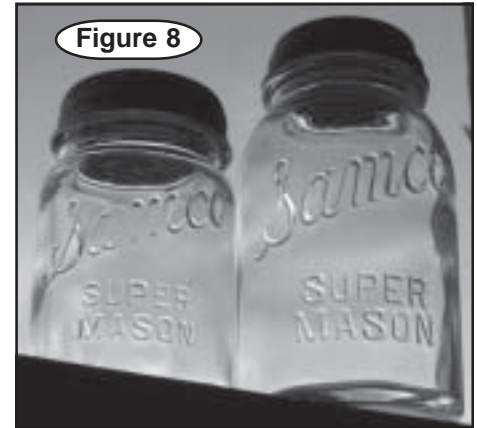


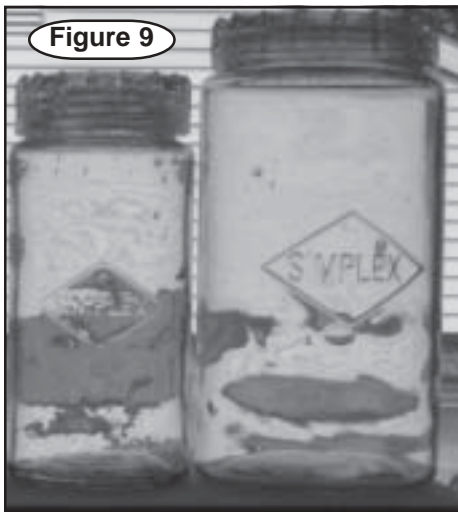
Figure 7



SIMPLEX (in a Diamond)

The ninth listing is an all glass container made for the packers of commercially prepared foodstuffs. Both the pint and near quart examples in this grouping are depicted in **Figure 9**. With a specially designed finish, these jars were sealed by a screw cap made to the May 3rd, 1904 patent issued to William Beach Fenn. In addition, they have the word - *SIMPLEX* - enclosed within an elongated diamond embossed on the front or, in some cases, the cylindrical vessel can be found without any embossing on it at all.

These models were manufactured from June 1903 until some point in 1908 by the Sterling, Perfection and Hazel-Atlas Glass Companies.¹¹ Fortunately for me, I've



managed to find the cover for a probable 64-ounce model. This fact suggests that a mate for the duo above was made. But that is as far as I've been able to go. Once again, for those diggers reading this article, keep an eye out for this missing member of the SIMPLEX team.

SIMPLEX MASON

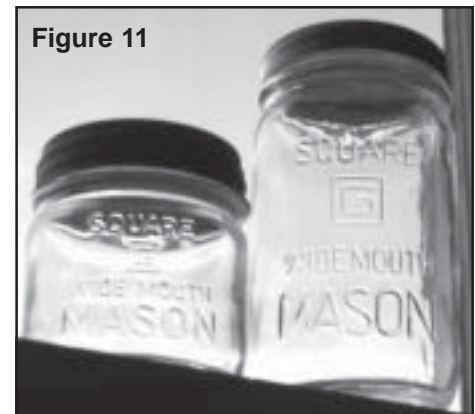
A century or so old, this penultimate duet is in need of a third party to make them a trio. Clear or sun-colored amethyst in tone, these threaded finish, shoulder seal models have the Perfection Glass Company's supposed trademark - SIMPLEX (in arched letters) above the word MASON (in a straight line) embossed on the front. Turned out between 1904 and 1906, these containers are carried under the "...Not generally available."¹² category in the *Fruit Jar Annual*.

Shown in **Figure 10**, both examples are alleged to have a mate that has been reported at an earlier date. In *Red Book 9*, a half-gallon edition is listed.¹³ But ask an acquaintance or two if they have seen an actual sixty-four ounce specimen. I did and none have. Nevertheless, I'm optimistic that the individual who has one of these jars in hiding will come forward with a photograph of it? That way, I can remove this Jar 54 from my list of the unaccountable.

SQUARE G (in a Square) WIDEMOUTH MASON

This set is the last of my eleven containers in absentia. Rounded square in shape, a sixteen- and thirty-two ounce example appear in **Figure 11** from left to right, respectively. Across the front on either version is the following embossing - SQUARE (one line) G in a square (one line) WIDEMOUTH (one line) MASON (one line). These screw topped, beaded seal jars come with a stippled base. Right in the center is the Glenshaw Glass Company's trademark - a capital G in a square. Above the logo is a mold number with a mold series number below the insignia. The pint carries the number 3045. Its quart counterpart has 3046 in the same location.

Likely produced in the 1950s or later¹⁴, these clear, widemouth models aren't very common at all. I was told by a retiree from Glenshaw Glass, one who worked during the 1950s and 1960s for this company, that 64-ounce containers with a widemouth



were manufactured. As encouraging as this oral history report may seem to be, it is only a rumor, in my estimation, until the last Jar 54 comes forward and is reported to be fit for duty.

Postscript

I've introduced you to eleven pairs of fruit jars that are seeking another member for their team. In some cases, this may prove to be an impossible deliverable because one wasn't turned out. In others, the half-gallon was probably manufactured but has gone unnoticed. In my opinion, over time the unaccounted for candidate(s) somehow acquired the reputation of being too pedestrian. Thus, they have been relegated to the ordinary bin; doomed to never again garner any attention. Wherever possible, I need your help to turn this situation around. And why is that, you ask? Because I have a soft spot in my collecting heart for these eleven, common but very uncommon, Jar 54s. *BLB*

Endnotes

¹ *The Great TV Sitcom Book*, Rick Mitz, Putnam Publishing Group, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, New York, 10016, 1983, pgs. 177-179.

² *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows 1946-Present (Sixth Edition)*, Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, Ballantine Books, New York, New York, 1995, pg. 166.

³ This trait was first reported by Dick Roller in his column *Fruit Jar News Clearing House* which appeared in the December 1979 edition of *Old Bottle Magazine*. See that article for more information on this unique feature.

⁴ The following reference has more details on this emblem - *Jars of the ANCHOR MASON'S PATENT (dot) Series*, Barry L. Bernas, *The Guide To Collecting Fruit Jars Fruit Jar Annual Volume 11 - 2006*, Jerome

Continued on Page 25.

