

# 433 GREEK KEY CREAMS AND SUGARS

Eric Tankesley-Clarke

My father had a little joke he used to play on me. He'd tell me that he could speak any language but Greek. Then he'd ask me to try him. So, I'd suggest one: "How do you say 'Good morning' in Russian?" It didn't matter what - French, Spanish, Japanese, Swahili - but he'd say, "I don't know, it's Greek to me." Well, it was funny to a six-year-old. The amazing thing was that it was funny *more than once*.

Heisey dabbled with many influences, but they certainly knew Greek. A favorite with many collectors, 433 Greek Key was popular when it was being produced, too. I suppose we each have our reasons for liking it. For me it was the weight of the pattern and the depth of the design. Greek Key was introduced about 1911 or 1912, with a full line right off the bat. In just a few years, though, many pieces were dropped, and the last Greek Key was made about 1938. None of the creams and sugars were made in anything but crystal, having been dropped before the resumption of color in the 1920's.



Figure 1 – Oval Sets

Unlike many earlier patterns, 433 was named by Heisey, and that name was Grecian Border. Some fastidious collectors still call it that. Generally, the factory name takes precedence and names given by collectors and researchers fade away. Greek Key, however, far outstrips in usage the factory name, and it's close to the authentic name. So don't look for it to go out of style anytime soon. Use "Greek Key" among

friends, and "Grecian Border" when you want to impress, and you'll do just fine.



Figure 2 – Round Hotel



Figure 3 – Table Set

Among the first pieces of Greek Key for many collectors are the oval hotel cream and sugar. The oval shape comes in two sizes (Fig. 1). While the hotel size is the most common of all the Greek Key sets, the individual ones are the least common, difficult but not truly rare. Both oval sets are toed in, having slightly larger bases than tops (ignoring the cream spouts). There are two round sets, in a hotel size (Fig. 2) and a larger round set intended for home table use (Fig. 3). Both round sets are straight up and down, as wide at the top as at the bottom. Neither of them is as common as the oval hotels, but neither would be counted as especially difficult. All shapes and sizes are of heavy glass, with thick bottoms that one could almost call shammed. All I've seen are marked. I have seen one individual cream that was dated. I'm sure, though, that other dated creams or sugars are out there. (The date is 9/12/11,

which seems to apply only to the oval ones, and is not the same date that appears in the crushed fruits and other pieces.)

(Editor's Note: There were four different design patents issued for the 433 line. Design patent 40,837 was issued 8/23/10 for the crushed fruit, 41,533 was issued 7/4/11 for the sherbet, 41,764 was granted on 9/12/11 covering the over sugar, and, finally 42,110 on 1/23/12 was for the scalloped edged nappy. These dates could appear on any piece covered by the particular patent, although I have never seen the sherbet date used on a piece. The earliest date for application of one of these patents is August 24, 1910 and the last one was applied for November 11, 1911. Those dates give you a good idea of the time frame that this pattern was being developed.)

The table sugar is generally considered the only one which is covered. Although lids in Greek Key had several different styles of knobs, two in particular are associated with the pattern. One is the so-called steeple knob, a tall, pointed, six-sided affair, making some pieces look as though they were intended for the Prussian army. The other is sometimes called a jewel knob, essentially globe-shaped, but faceted. (I hear some geometry teacher right now growling, "It's a polyhedron." There's just no pleasing everyone.) It is the jewel knob that is on the table sugar's cover. The rims of all the creams and sugars are plain and flat, fire-polished, not ground. That means the cover sits right on top, although there is an inner collar on the lid to hold it in place.

Greek Key had the full table set of cream, sugar, butter, and spoon, all handled. (There were two other spoons, neither with handles. One, the same as the pickle jar bottom or the small straw jar, is a "small" spoon which is *larger* than the one in the table set—oh, those Heisey folks loved to kid - and the other a "large" one, which also served as a tall celery or a candy jar bottom.) Telling the difference between a sugar without its cover and a handled spoon is especially tricky with Greek Key pieces. It is

sometimes said they are the same. However, a close look at the catalog illustrations and actual pieces shows there is a difference. Most of the time, sizes were accurately shown in Catalog 75, the one in which the 433 pattern first makes its appearance. (If you don't have a reprint of Catalog 75 handy, you can also look in Vogel, Vol. 2, for the same illustrations.) Carefully measure the illustrations for the table sugar and the spoon, and you'll find that the sugar is drawn wider than the spoon. Actual examples bear this out. While they are the same height (allowing for how vigorously the bottom may have been ground on individual pieces), the sugar is a full half-inch wider. That's enough to have required two different molds. When looking at the sugar with its cover on, the difference is less obvious, so I've included an illustration with the sugar, cover removed, and the spoon beside it for comparison (Fig. 4). The sugar cover cannot fit on the spoon. How do you tell out in the field? The sugar is a little wider than it is tall, and the spoon is a little narrower than it is tall. Just remember—sugar makes you fat! This is just like you see in other patterns. The spoon needs to be narrower to hold the spoons within it upright, and the sugar needs to be wider to make it easier to scoop or pick out the sugar inside.



Figure 4 – Table Sugar and Spoon

In Catalog 75, the table sugar is the only one you'll see with a cover. You can imagine my surprise, then, when I came across a round hotel sugar with a cover, one with a steeple knob (Fig. 2). As for how it fits, it is perfect, not too snug, not too loose. However, there is a ¼" overhang that struck me as odd. Despite the proper fit, I wondered if someone had "married" a cover to the sugar, so I started rooting around for other

possibilities. At least the knop told me it almost had to be for *some* Greek Key piece.

There are a few pieces of Greek Key that have lids that seem to be borrowed from other patterns. Take, for instance, the tall straw jar. The catalog shows the jar cover with a knop like the one used in 429 Plain Panel Recess, and a few other patterns, besides. What about the pickle jar? It is shown with a cover taken straight out of 341 Puritan. What if, I wondered, Heisey had actually made steeple-knopped covers for them that just didn't make it into the catalog? Well, I tried. Goodness knows, I tried. I put the sugar cover on the straw jar. Too big. Not by much, but too much to be accidental. Pickle jar? Perfect—from the outside. But inside? Way too loose, giving it much more play than it should. If the sugar cover had notches in the right places, it would have been a perfect fit for the individual ice tub, both inside and out. I tried just about everything that was even close, likely or not. The overhang was unusual but the hotel sugar was the only one that actually fit the cover. I declared it the winner.

Nevertheless, I despaired of ever proving that Heisey intended the two pieces to go together. Then I discovered in an old price list (No. 179, 1917) that, yes, the hotel sugar was offered both with and without a cover. Walter confirmed it is also in Price List 175 (1913). The story doesn't end there. I had consulted every catalog available to me, and most other sources I could think of. As far as I was concerned, I had exhausted the research possibilities. How short-sighted of me. The day after I first gave a copy of this article to Walter, I was thumbing through Sandra Stout's *Heisey on Parade* on another mission. I go to this source for information on ads I've picked up, but seldom think of it for verifying pieces of glass themselves. There was my covered hotel sugar, complete with the lid overhang that had worried me from the get-go. At last I was vindicated, and a little chagrined. A quick message to Walter was in order and a re-write of this paragraph. My guess is that Heisey adapted the same cover for the

individual ice tub and hotel sugar, realizing there was no economic sense in creating a different mold just to remove the slight overhang.

I recount this whole sordid tale for a few reasons: (1) if something looks different from what you expect, first rule out everything you can, (2) sometimes what you are left with really is something new and different, (3) leave no resource unturned, and (4) this is yet more proof Heisey just wanted to torment us. There may be a reader or two out there for whom the covered hotel sugar is not news. It was available at least four years, after all. I'd like to hear about it if you happen to have one, too. Or I could simply declare that there is "only one known." That should flush out a bevy of them.

### Vital statistics

Handles are not included in any of the following measurements.

Table cream: 3 1/8" top outer diameter; 3 3/8" high

Table sugar: 3 5/8" top outer diameter; 3 3/8" high w/o cover, 5 7/8" to top of cover

Spoon: 3 1/8" top outer diameter; 3 3/8" high

Round hotel cream: 3 1/8" top outer diameter; 2 1/2" high

Round hotel sugar: 3 3/8" top outer diameter; 2 1/2" high w/o cover, 4 7/8" to top of cover

Oval hotel cream: 2 1/2" x 4 1/2" (top, including spout); 3" high

Oval hotel sugar: 2 1/2" x 4" (top); 3" high

Oval individual cream: 1 3/4" x 3 1/4" (top, including spout); 2 1/4" high

Oval individual sugar: 1 7/8" x 2 3/4" (top); 2 1/4" high

All are marked inside the bottom. Bottoms are all ground and have oval or round stars as appropriate.

*Got some tormenting piece you want to talk about? Write me (in any language but Greek) at [heisey@embarqmail.com](mailto:heisey@embarqmail.com).*