

# Heisey Stack Sets



Front: #473 Narrow Flute with Rim griddle cake set. Back, from left: #354 Wide Flat Panel, #356 Wide Flat Panel, #473 Narrow Flute with Rim, and #1184 Yeoman sugar and cream stack sets.

There is never enough space, is there? Cabinets, shelves, boxes, garages, basements, every flat surface, they all get stuffed with glass. Honestly now, how many of you Heisey collectors have room for everything you have? .... I didn't count many hands up, and I think some of you were just wondering where the restroom is.

Space has always been a problem. In 1914, a section in *Good Housekeeping* magazine showed a photo to get across a new space-saving idea—sugar, cream, and butter all stacked up. The caption read, "There will be more room on the invalid's tray when this new piece—a sugar-bowl, cream-pitcher, and butter-dish nested one atop the other—is used." Aren't all those hyphens quaint? I doubt that Heisey invented the notion of stacking the sets, although they did submit a design patent for one set in 1914. The folks at *Good Housekeeping* either thought the idea was truly new or someone at Heisey had convinced them it was. Regardless, before too long other companies made stack sets, too.

Heisey rose to the space-conscious occasion with four stack sets of sugar, cream, and butter: #354 Wide Flat Panel, #356 (which I'm also calling Wide Flat Panel, for reasons that will soon become obvious), #1184 Yeoman, and #473 Narrow Flute with Rim. The first three appeared all at once, in 1913. Narrow Flute with Rim came along a few years later. Whenever mentioned in the price lists, Heisey always called these "combination sets." These days, most collectors simply call them "stack sets."

In their advertising, A.H. Heisey & Co. liked to associate these compact sets with gracious living. In one ad, the company lets its readers know that the "clear, sparkling glass and beautiful design of Heisey's Glassware will add to the daintiness of any service, whether to tempt the invalid or for the afternoon cup of tea." Breakfast trays, well-furnished hotels, even invalid trays all sound warm, caring, inviting. Contrast this with Duncan & Miller's marketing strategy: they called them "hospital sets." Who wants that?

Heisey must have been very proud of their “combination sets.” Either that, or they felt that their retailers and the public needed education on how to use them. In that grand old Catalog 75 of about 1913, Heisey went to some trouble to show the pieces in various combinations: cream alone, cream with butter, sugar alone, sugar with butter, and all three together, repeating the exercise for each of the three patterns. On one page alone, they used 16 illustrations and repeated most of them elsewhere in the same catalog. Admittedly, one of the combinations, which I’ll deal with later, doesn’t strictly involve a cream or sugar. But, all told, Heisey gave up a couple of pages of valuable catalog space to all this mixing and matching. Someone in the head office must have intended to prove a point to those who were unfamiliar or behind the times.

A feature of all of the sugar and cream stack sets is that the cream is always intended to sit on the sugar, never the other way around. In differing degrees, all the sugar and cream stack sets slope inward gradually from the base of the sugar to the top of the cream. The cream of a stack set always has a thick inset bottom that fits inside the top of the sugar. It seems strange, but the catalogs almost never show that special purpose cream bottom and when they do it is so subtly drawn that you might not notice it; the illustrations nearly always lead the viewer to believe the cream bottoms are perfectly flat.

In theory, the individual butter could fit either the cream or the sugar. In practice, the sugar was a little larger than the cream, so the butter sometimes sat down almost too far if placed directly on the sugar. This is especially true of the #1184 Yeoman set, which tapers more strongly than the others, creating more of a size difference between sugar and cream.

Heisey always called the top piece an individual butter, but most of us call them butter pats. I like the latter term better. For one thing, it sounds like a term of endearment right out of a W. C. Fields routine. “Is this seat taken, my little butter pat?” You can just hear him sidling up to a disdainful Mae West, can’t you? For another, “butter pat” avoids confusion with other individual butters that were in different shapes.

All of the sugar and cream stack sets are less common than their corresponding hotel size sets, but I wouldn’t call any of them rare. The #473 Narrow Flute with Rim griddle cake set is scarce.

### Wide Flat Panel

The Wide Flat Panel stack set has almost nothing in common with the Wide Flat Panel oval hotel set. (See *Heisey News*, December, 2011.) Oh, yes, Heisey put them

in the same pattern, but they share only the angularity of the handles to bring them together. These are the main colonial entry in the Heisey stack set line-up. Sugar and cream each has eight broad sides gently arched at top and bottom to soften the profile. The butter pat which goes with the stack set always has 12 discreet panels. The cream has a comparatively large, moulded spout with only a little hand tooling at the very tip. The butter pat sometimes has a ground star bottom, and other times a plain bottom that is slightly recessed and fire-polished. The bottoms of the sugar and the cream are each ground with an impressed star. All three pieces are marked. Overall, this set is the largest of the sugar and cream stack sets.

The #354 stack set was in production the longest of any of them, and is the only set available in color. This set first appeared in Catalog 75 and was listed continuously through Price List 210, 1933. That puts the production period at around 20 years. Given that this covers the range of most of the second color period, I’m surprised that the only color for this set is Flamingo. Curiously, however, the individual butter is also listed in PL210 in Sahara, but I don’t know of the sugar or cream in that or any other color.



#354 Wide Flat Panel stack set

There was another Wide Flat Panel set and that was under the pattern number of 356. It differs from the #354 Wide Flat Panel stack set only by removing the handles from the sugar. The sugar has exactly the same body in the same dimensions, but the handles are gone. The idea may have been to save even more tray space. Given the relative scarcity of the unhandled sugar, the idea doesn’t seem to have taken hold. The cream and the butter are exactly the same in both sets, so when they are in crystal you can call those top two pieces #354 or #356, whichever suits you best.



#356 Wide Flat Panel stack set

The #356 Wide Flat Panel stack set did not last nearly as long as its #354 handled counterpart. While #356 appeared in Catalog 75, it was only on a page devoted mostly to combination sets and again in a miscellaneous section near the back of the catalog.

The #356 set showed up in Price List 205 (1919) but was not in 1922's Price List 206 or later ones. Because of the limited production period, the #356 Wide Flat Panel stack set was not made in color.

You can see why I place the #356 set in Wide Flat Panel, even though the pattern number is technically different. It never appeared with the crushed fruit, lavender jars, puff box, ash tray, or cruet that bear the same number. The number 356 seemed to have been used casually and intermittently as a way to expand other series, rather than to group similar items together.

Incidentally, the handles of the #354 sugar were not literally removed to make the #356 sugar. Since the #354 sugar handles were pressed, it would have taken different moulds to produce the two different sugars. I have more often seen the #356 sugar as an individual piece than as part of a set. That makes me think there may be some lonely Wide Flat Panel creams out there who have been pining for the #354 sugars of their dreams, when a suitable #356 mate was just next door.

## Yeoman

The third set that appears in Cat. 75 is #1184 Yeoman. This gave the buyer an option between a colonial paneled set or a simple, plain design. The Yeoman design was patented, but they didn't even bother to apply for the patent until the set had already been on

the market for a while. Smooth, round shapes rule the day in this pattern. Even the handles are simple curves without any angles or abrupt changes in direction. (Duncan & Miller's #28 pattern clearly trod on Yeoman turf, with simple shapes of its own. The stack set in that pattern resembles Yeoman, but the handles give it away quickly. D&M handles have a pert crook in them that Heisey designer Andrew Sanford would barely have countenanced.) The Yeoman set is slightly smaller than the Wide Flat Panel sets.

That very plain surface proved all too tempting for decorating firms. The example in the photo features the deeply cut and finely detailed vintage decoration often attributed to Tuthill. Other, simpler cuttings and silver overlays also occur on this set.



#1184 Yeoman stack set

Now, here's a curious thing. #1184 Yeoman also includes an unhandled piece that you could be forgiven for thinking was another sugar. They even pictured it right alongside all those different ways of combining the pieces. They removed handles to make two sets in Wide Flat Panel, so they must have done it in Yeoman, right? Well, no. Heisey called the Yeoman version an ice tub. That didn't stop them from selling the individual butter with it, though. The ice tub's dimensions are the same as the cream's, just a little bit smaller than the handled sugar.

The butter pat that goes with the #1184 set is not paneled and lies nearly flat with a ground star bottom. The sugar and cream also have ground star bottoms. These pieces are all marked, too.

The #1184 set shared production dates with #356. That is, it was made from about 1913 to roughly 1920, give or take a year or two. That explains why the Yeoman stack sets are never seen in color.

You may think we are done with Yeoman. But no. We would be forgetting about the #1186 Yeoman butter pat. It is very plain, just like the #1184 butter pat. The most obvious difference is in the profile, and the size is slightly different, too. The #1184 butter pat is shallow and nearly flat. The #1186 is deeper with a distinct rim and a pronounced well. (You will see a similar deep-well profile in the #473 Narrow Flute with Rim butter pat.) In fact, the #1186 piece was billed as a milk bottle cover. The catalog only mentioned as an aside that it could be used as an individual butter. There is

no evidence that it was ever used as part of any of the stacking sets, including the #473 griddle cake set. Its fit is slightly off, regardless of which set you might try it on, sitting a little too high and a bit too wide. It would do in a pinch and even many serious collectors might be none the wiser. Nevertheless, this was a standalone piece and not likely ever intended to replace the other butter pats. The #1186 piece was only made for a few years in the 1920's, so it is seen less often than the shallow #1184 style.



#1184 individual butter (left) and #1186 milk bottle cover also used as individual butter.

### Narrow Flute with Rim

The last and smallest of the sugar and cream combination sets is #473 Narrow Flute with Rim, illustrated in Cat. 100 and 102. Heisey called the cream and sugar by the unlovely moniker "squat individual" to help distinguish them from one other individual sugar and two other individual creams. This may be the most difficult of the stacking sugar and cream sets to find. It had the shortest production period and is popular among collectors, a combination that creates happy sellers and trembling buyers. Even though some pieces of Narrow Flute with Rim were put in commerce as early as about 1916, I can't find any listings for the sugar and cream stack sets before about 1922. Due to the spottiness of documentation during that time, the exact dates are uncertain. What is certain is that by 1928, they were gone from the price lists forever. A precious few pieces of Narrow Flute with Rim can be found in Moongleam, Flamingo, or Canary, but I have never heard of the sugar and cream stack set being among them.

The #473 set has the same simply curved handles of the Yeoman set. The butter pat has 24 small panels. These echo the 28 narrow flutes of the bodies of the cream and sugar. I guess I should say that the cream and sugar have room for 28 flutes, but the handles nearly obscure some of them. I was nearly fooled once, though. I came across what appeared to be a one-handed squat



#473 Narrow Flute with Rim stack set

individual sugar. On closer inspection, I found that a very skilled glass repairer had removed one handle and almost perfectly constructed flutes where they had never been before! Unlike the other stacking creams, the #473 cream has a hand-tooled pulled spout, not moulded.

The Narrow Flute with Rim butter pat is also used on another stack set, and you aficionados of the pattern are way ahead of me here, because you know I'm talking about the griddle cake set.



#473 Narrow Flute with Rim griddle cake set, assembled

This set is made up of four pieces, not three. The top two parts sound like the roll call for a standard sugar and cream stack set: a butter pat sits on top of a small, square-handled syrup, what we'd otherwise call a cream. The bottom part is two pieces, a cover and a flanged piece Heisey called a plate but that we might think of as a shallow nappy or a soup bowl. The "nappy" has a small inset rim right where the flange meets the rest of the bowl at the top of the flutes; this supports the cover. I wouldn't be too surprised if some collectors already have this piece, not realizing Heisey intended it for hotcakes rather than a nice bowl of minestrone. The cover lets out the steam through a piercing in the center, the syrup sits inside a ring on the cover, and the butter pat tops it off. The ring on the cover even has three notches in it to be sure the steam can still escape when the syrup is in place. In keeping with the pride of A. H. Heisey & Co., the cover is double-marked, a Diamond H on either side of the piercing. The other pieces have the usual single mark inside the bottoms.

If you found the syrup all on its own, you would notice that thick, inset bottom just like on stack set creams. But this piece is not squat like the true squat cream. Instead, it is adapted from the 3-oz. individual cream that Heisey used in their dice sugar set. In a separate article we'll look at the rest of the Narrow Flute with Rim sugars and creams, so there will be a chance for some other comparisons. The syrup has a moulded spout with a hand-tooled tip, another difference between it and the squat stacking cream.

The gaps in price lists play hob with dating the griddle cake set. It does not appear in any of the 1920's-era price lists or catalogs I have seen. We are fortunate to have a catalog illustration, though, and even more

fortunate that it has been reprinted. The 1982 HCA-sanctioned reprint of Cat. 76 (blue-covered) contains added pages. These pages are not in the brown-covered Cat. 76 reprint from 1968 done by House of Memories in Santa Monica, CA. Cat. 76 itself dates from about 1915, but it isn't clear what is the source or date of the added pages at the back that include our wonderful griddle cake set. I would guess the set was made only around 1916-18. That rules out color for the set. Even in crystal, such an unusual set may not have had much market anyway, so don't expect to find it for sale very often, or even the pieces that make it up.

### Odds and Ends

When these sets left the factory, some of them headed not to retailers or wholesalers but to decorating companies. The Yeoman stack set was a favorite for cuttings by other companies. The Wide Flat Panel set seemed to attract silver overlay more often. I don't recall seeing Narrow Flute with Rim sugar and cream stack sets being decorated; if they're out there, I'd expect some light metal trim, or maybe a simple laurel cutting around the rim. I doubt the griddle cake set was decorated much if at all because there just isn't that much space to work with.

So there you have it, four sugar and cream stack sets and one griddle cake stack set. Throughout the company's history, Heisey ventured new ideas or improved on old ones. When it came to these sets, though, it seems the long-term odds were stacked against them. You knew I'd have to get to the double entendre eventually, didn't you? By 1935, much earlier for most of them, they were all gone and were probably never big sellers in the meantime. It isn't hard to imagine one of these towers of sparkling glass becoming countless shards as it slid off a graciously appointed tray of tea and crumpets or that early morning breakfast tray. As for the griddle cakes, well, the size that would fit in those little plates was mighty small, suitable only for the most dainty appetites. All that worked against the stack sets, and now they are less common than many other Heisey sugars and creams. More challenging to find means your pride can stack up a little higher, too, when you've added them to your own collection. And there's always space for that, isn't there?

### Vital Statistics

#354 Wide Flat Panel—*individual sugar*, 1 3/4" high, 3 1/4" top diameter, 3 3/8" base diameter, 5 1/4" wide with handles; *individual cream*, 1 7/8" high, 3" top diameter, 3 1/8" base diameter, 4 1/2" spout to handle; *individual butter*, 1/4" high, 2 3/4" top diameter, 1 3/4" base diameter. Overall height when assembled, 3 1/2".

#356 Wide Flat Panel—*sugar*, height and diameters as for #354; *cream*, *butter* as in #354.

#1184 Yeoman—*individual sugar*, 1 5/8" high, 3" top diameter, 3 1/4" base diameter, 5" wide with handles; *individual cream*, 1 3/4" high, 2 3/4" top diameter, 3" base diameter, 4 3/8" spout to handle; *individual butter*, 1/4" high, 2 3/4" top diameter, 1 3/4" base diameter. Overall height when assembled, 3 3/8".

#1186 Yeoman—*individual butter (milk bottle cover)*, 5/8" high, 2 7/8" top, 2" base diameter.

#473 Narrow Flute with Rim sugar and cream stack set—*individual squat sugar*, 1 1/2" high, 2 3/4" top diameter, 2 7/8" base diameter, 4 3/4" wide with handles; *individual squat cream*, 1 5/8" high, 2 1/2" top diameter, 2 3/4" base diameter, 4" spout to handle; *individual butter*, 1/2" high, 2 5/8" top, 2" base diameter. Overall height when assembled, 3 1/8".

#473 Narrow Flute with Rim griddle cake stack set—*plate (flanged nappy)*, 1 1/4" high, 7 1/8" top diameter, 4 1/8" base diameter; *pierced cover*, 1 3/4" high, 5 3/4" base diameter, 2 3/8" diameter of top seating ring, 3/4" piercing; *individual syrup*, 2 3/4" high, 2 1/2" top diameter, 2 3/8" base diameter, 3 3/4" spout to handle; *individual butter*, same as for sugar and cream stack set. Overall height when assembled, 5 1/8".

#354 set found in Flamingo. #354 individual butter also in Sahara. Otherwise, all crystal. All marked. All with ground, star bottoms, except some #354 individual butters, especially those in color.

*Is space a problem for you? Do you stack a lot more than just creams and sugars? Then you sound like just the sort I want to hear from, at [heisey@embarqmail.com](mailto:heisey@embarqmail.com).*

Eric Tankesley-Clarke



#473 Narrow Flute with Rim griddle cake set parts, clockwise from top left: griddle cake plate, pierced cover, individual butter, individual 3-oz. syrup.