

Lilly Pad Sugar Bowl and Compote



Left: Covered sugar bowl, c. 1835-65. Height 6½ inches. Attributed to Redford or Redwood, NY. Blown aqua glass in form of a 2-handled globular bowl with applied crimped foot and a domed cover with chicken finial. The bowl and cover with applied so-called “lily pad” decoration. Rough pontil. Ex. George McKearin collection. Anonymous lender.



Right: Compote, c. 1835-65. Attributed to Redford or Redwood, NY. Depth 8½ inches. Blown aqua glass in form of a shallow footed bowl, the bowl with 5 applied so-called “lily pads”. Rough pontil mark. Ex. John Gotjens collection. Anonymous lender.

Few decorations in early glass are so indicative of an American origin as the so-called “Lily Pad.” This designation was assigned during the 1930s. No known 19th century reference describes this style of decoration on glassware as relating to the lily. However, Arlene Palmer points out in *Glass In Early America* that the discovery of the lily in South America, and its subsequent propagation in England inspired silver and porcelain designers during the mid-19th century. Palmer does mention the occurrence in the 18th century of similar decoration on some European glassware. However, she doubts that these objects were the probable inspiration for 19th century American glass-men.¹

The covered sugar bowl is a rarity. The design occurs mostly on pitchers, bowls and compotes—successfully complementing the swirling nature of these objects. The glass was produced in several colors. Although aqua colored specimens have been traced to Connecticut and even a Canadian glasshouse, most aqua colored examples are assigned to Redford and Redwood NY (or New Jersey) circa 1835-65. Amber colored examples are assigned to Stoddard, circa 1842-73. In the early 20th century, the popularity among collectors of lily pad design led to the manufacture of reproductions. Produced between the 1920s and the 1940s, most of these can be differentiated from the authentic examples by color, design and pontil variation. However, they still come onto the market without an accurate description.

Probably more than simply off-hand pieces for friends and relatives, the surviving numbers suggest they were a part of the dinnerware inventory. The compote was designed for the serving of various fruits stewed in sugar. Covered glass sugar bowls first appear in England and the Continent around 1730 when they would have contained lumps of sugar broken off from a cone. By the mid-19th century they would presumably contain a more refined granular sugar.

¹ Arlene Palmer, *Glass in Early America*, A Winterthur Book, 1993

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