

OBJECT ID	2011.7.99
OBJECT NAME	Jar, Food-storage
OBJECT COLLECTION	Alex's Candy Shop (is part of)
DATE CREATED	1920 – 1940
MATERIAL	Glass
OBJECT ENTITIES	Rassogianis/Franks families, By (owned by) Franks, Rassogianis; (is related to)

OBJECT DESCRIPTION

This storage container has two parts, a lid and the base to be used for storage. The whole container is made of a clear glass. The lid is square in shape and on each side of it there are arch-like designs that extend outwards. There are two of these on each of the sides, each decreasing in size as they come farther out. The area where the lid fits into the base is simple and is a rougher glass to provide a seal. The opaque nature has worn off in certain areas from use. There are some areas of dirt on the inside of the lid, but not enough to make the whole thing less translucent.

The base is made of the same clear glass and is more of a rectangular shape. The base also has the arch design, but only on two sides. They are more elongated due to the taller height of the base as opposed to the lid. On the base there is a circular indentation that goes up a little, into the jar's interior. As with the lid there are textured areas of dirt that has embedded itself into the jar. The areas are not restricted to one area of the base but appear in different areas and patterns. The merely fog the glass a little, they dont make it opaque.

ORIGIN

Paulina Franks' grandfather, John Rassogianis, came to Chicago in the 1890s. He began his life in the new city by peddling fruits and later, with the help of his sons Alex and George, would open a candy store. In the 1920s Paulina Franks' father Constantine became a part of the family business and the store was able to prosper. When the second business closed Paulina Rassogianis chose to hold as many of the candy store's items as possible and, later, donate them to the National Hellenic Museum.

The Rassogianis family began their candy business in Chicago proper, working out of their own shop named "St. Louis Ice Cream Parlor." Eventually, the shop was closed and the Rassogianis' chose to continue their candy store venture in Berwyn, Illinois. The new shop they chose to open was named Alex's Sweet Shop.

Paulina Franks' father was a key contributor to the success of the Rassogianis candy stores. While Constantine Rassogianis was a noteworthy entrepeneur, he also had many other accomplishments. Among these was his four years of involvment in the Greek national military during World War I wherein he obtained the rank of sergeant. Also, he was a published author and poet, an experienced mandolin player, a church officer and had extensive knowledge of psalti.

Although not much is known about what company created this glass jar, the history of glass being used in food storage, like this one was, is long and interesting. The first glass bottles were produced around 1500 B.C. The peoples of the Roman Empire used more glass than any other ancient civilization due to their discovery of glassblowing in the Syro-Palestinian region during the first century B.C. Because of that occurrence, glass vessels became commonplace throughout the empire by the first century A.D. and from time to time were exported to places as far afield as Scandinavia and the Far East.

The most far-reaching technical innovation was the discovery of glassblowing. It is also easily arguable that is was the most important discovery in the entire preindustrial history of glassmaking after that of glass itself. Before this discovery, glass vessels were made by labor-intensive techniques such as the creation of shapes by casting or slumping in molds and the finishing of surfaces by grinding and polishing which took a lot of effort and time.

America's glass bottle and glass jar industry was born in the early 1600. Glass bottles were expensive as the industry relied on individual glassblowers, but the invention of the automatic glass bottle blowing machine in 1903 changed the product into the commodity it has become today. It was now possible to mass produce glass bottles and glass jars which were uniform height, weight, and capacity.

Glass jars were used as food storage containers to help keep food fresh, edible and safe from pests as long as possible. Dry foods, such as dried fruits, crackers, cereal, pasta, rice or chips should be stored in an airtight container like a plastic bag or a glass container. These foods should not be exposed to air in order to avoid moisture, which will quickly decrease the quality of the food and is why glass containers were widely used for this purpose. Actually preserving food by heat-treating and then sealing it in airtight containers didn't come along until the late 18th century.

In 1795, Napoleon Bonaparte offered a reward for whomever could develop a safe, reliable food preservation method for his constantly traveling army. Nicholas Appert took on the challenge, and about 15 years later introduced a method that involved heat-processing food in glass jars reinforced with wire and sealing them with wax. This is reminiscent of today's glass containers having a rubber stopper attached to the lid. By the time of the U.S. Civil War glass food preservation jars with metal clamps and replaceable rubber rings had been invented and are still available today. In 1858, John Mason invented a glass container with a screw-on thread molded into its top, and a lid with a rubber seal which has become the most commonly known glass jar able to hold different types of substances, the Mason Jar.

This object was most likely used to hold candy or the ingredients to make the ice cream or other sweets which Alex's Sweet Shop sold. Its lack of maker's mark probably means it was mass produced and widely distributed so the history of this specific jar is unknown.

CITATION

Jar, Food-storage, 1920 – 1940, Alex's Candy Shop, *National Hellenic Museum*, https://collections.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/Detail/objects/. Accessed 11/10/26.