

Central States Meeting Report

by Linda and Larry Yoder

Warm hospitality by hosts Linda & Larry Yoder greeted 50 members who attended the 12th Central States meeting held July 22 – 25, 2010 at Clarion Inn in the heartland of Iowa. The Clarion is located between the Amana Colonies and Kalona Iowa. EAPGS members came from Colorado, Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Wisconsin and Ohio.

The Amana Colonies are 7 villages on 30,000 acres settled in 1854 by German immigrants. They escaped persecution in Germany and Switzerland and “The Community of True Inspiration” formed a communal style of living in each village.

Only 35 miles south is Kalona, Iowa and surrounding area where lives the largest Amish and Mennonite community west of the Mississippi River. The first Old Order Amish arrived in 1846 from Pennsylvania. Larry Yoder’s ancestry is Old Order Amish and hometown is Kalona.

Several members who arrived Thursday afternoon quickly went about setting up tables of glassware to sell. As 19 members unpacked treasures many oh’s and ah’s were exclaimed. Purchases continued throughout the meeting. To conclude the evening Linda Yoder led introductions and encouraged everyone to tell about their favorite EAPG patterns. It’s amazing how many different types and patterns are collected by EAPGS members.

In addition to beautiful scenery and wonderful people another attraction brought people to the meeting. Of much interest was the history of two glass factories, Eagle Glass Works and Iowa City Flint Glass Factory which were located within driving distance of Amana and Kalona.

In 1879 J. H. Leighton, Wheeling West Virginia, came to Iowa to establish a glass factory in the ever expanding westward movement and growing population. He wanted to produce cheap glassware readily available to the growing frontier. James Leighton was related to the Scottish immigrant Thomas Leighton, a glassblower at the New England Glass Company, thus a member of the Leighton family who produced many glassblowers and artisans.

In May 1879 Leighton formed the Eagle Glass Works in Keota, Iowa where he became the Manager. It produced mostly plain utilitarian glassware with just a few patterns. Due to poor quality sand and annealing the glass factory closed after 9 months.

Next Leighton started the Iowa City Flint Glass Factory in Iowa City, Iowa. It was incorporated April 30 1880 and again Leighton was general manager. It closed the summer of 1882. With such short production times glass from both companies is sought after by EAPGS collectors, especially people from Iowa.

Friday morning Keith Hemingway gave a wonderful illustrated educational presentation on Iowa City/Keota Glass. Keith’s fam



Ray and Martha Bahr check out the glass for sale.



Keith discussing Iowa City glass with Stephanie Fecik.



Marilyn Woodin talks about blue opaque and blue milk glass.

ily has a personal history with the Iowa City Flint Glass Factory. His Great-Grandfather James Porter Coulter was a major stock holder. As was Keith's Mother, Mrs. Emery, Etta Coulter, Hemingway and her brother Chan F. Coulter. Keith lives on the Coulter/Hemingway farm in the original house homesteaded over 170 years ago. Keith's family collection of Iowa City Glass is one of the largest and best in Iowa and perhaps the country. Keith's presentation was complimented with over 50 pieces of Iowa City and Keota pieces. Linda Yoder and Lillian Henry contributed a few pieces for the display. The true family story goes that James Coulter mortgaged 40 acres of farm ground to purchase shares of the Iowa City Glass Factory. When the factory went bankrupt he lost the 40 acres. According to family lore when the factory closed each shareholder received a barrel of glass. The story continues that James was so unhappy he broke every piece of glassware in the barrel. If you know anything about Iowa farmers, land is much more important than a few pieces of glass dishes! It took a Great-Great-Grandson 100 years to purchase the land and return it to the family farm.

Also Friday Steve Skeim, EAPGS Profiler and Identifier, gave two excellent presentations. One was on Celeries and their history. Most of us have a celery or two in our collections. Steve's other presentation was on Pattern Profiles. Steve emphasized how important it is to get proper documentation on glass pieces. It got many of us thinking of learning more about the glassware pieces in our collections.

Friday afternoon was spent hunting for treasures at the many Amana antique shops. The day was concluded with a family style meal and a hilarious theatre production.

Saturday was Kalona Day. We arrived at the beautiful Kalona Historical Museum and Village to learn about Old Order Amish and Mennonite lifestyles. Marilyn Woodin, curator, gave a presentation on Blue Milk and Blue Opaque Glass. A prized piece is a small lamp from the Helena Rubinstein Collection.

Marilyn gave a guided tour of the museum, including talking about handmade Amish quilts. Ken Wagner showed his Iowa City/Keota Glass collection that he donated to the museum.

An Amish style lunch in a private home was enjoyed by everyone. Homemade pies, peanut butter, apple butter and bread plus tapioca pudding were some of the delicious foods served during the meal. No one left hungry.

Saturday afternoon was spent touring homes or hunting through excellent antique shops in Kalona. Greg and Connie Boyd's home in Iowa City was toured first. Their extensive collection has both EAPG, mostly Iowa City, and toothpicks. It is beautifully displayed.

Next was the Coulter/Hemingway home, near West Branch, with its fabulous collection of Iowa City Glass. Keith has 5 original Iowa City Glassware salesman sheets. They are the only ones known to exist. He displayed them along with original glassware pieces to match each sheet.

Iowa City Glass Factory also made colored swirled glass canes. "What a beautiful collection!" was expressed by many as they

toured Keith's home. Thank you to Greg, Connie and Keith for sharing your collections.

Saturday concluded with a banquet, pattern identification and silent auction. John and Stephanie Fecik purchased a glass cane at an antique shop that they feel was made by the Iowa City Factory. The silent auction bidding was spirited with Linda Yoder counting down the minutes. Members donated generously and raised \$716.00 for the Central States Treasury. Thank you, Lonnie and Lynn Salzberger for organizing the excellent silent auction.

Everyone had a wonderful time and voted to have the next EAPGS Central States in conjunction with the Annual Meeting July 7-10, 2011 in Kansas City.



Ken Wagner, on the right discusses his donated collection.



Several of the original Iowa City Glassware salesman's sheets.