

WESTMORELAND GLASS  
BY  
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The Westmoreland Glass Company was founded in 1889. Early in that year, the directors of the Specialty Glass Company of East Liverpool, Ohio decided to move their plant to Grapeville, PA, because of the abundance of natural gas in that area. Grapeville is a small town located about 25 miles east of Pittsburgh near Jeannette. Construction of the plant started in October 1889 and the glass production began in 1890.

Mr. Ira F. Brainard financially backed the two West brothers, Charles and George R in the development of the new glass works at Grapeville. The West brothers bought the plant in 1890 and changed the name of it to the Westmoreland Speciality Company. The West brothers ran the company until 1920, at which time George West sold out his interest to Charles West and Ira Brainard.

Since glassmaking was their primary product, the name Speciality was misleading, so in 1923 the name was changed to The Westmoreland Glass Company. The pot furnace concept was used by Westmoreland in making their glass. Westmoreland not only made an excellent carnival glassware, but was also famous for their milk glass.

For many years Westmoreland glass was one of the few companies who destroyed "seconds" that was a very good, but no doubt somewhat expensive policy. However, it apparently paid off in the long run for quality meant so much not only to those buying their glass but also to those making it during Westmoreland's great years.

James J. Brainard joined the company in 1920. His father Ira Brainard died in 1927. Charles West ran the plant until 1937 at which time James J. Brainard became president. During the depression Westmoreland was badly hurt, but never stopped operation. J. H. Brainard son of J.J. Brainard joined the company in 1933 and became president in 1953 when his father died. The management of the Brainard family extended for three generations dating back to 1889.

The glass business flourished well for Westmoreland during the mid and late fifties, they could not handle all their orders, so they would have to stop orders in June of every year with the statement "we are sold out".

Those were the good years for the entire glass industry, but the hand writing soon began to appear on the wall. There was indication with the ever increasing cost of gas and the cost of labor it would be difficult to produce hand made glassware.

Mr. David Grossman, a designer from St Louis, Missouri bought Westmoreland in March 1981.

In May 1982 the Westmoreland Glass Company shut down their furnaces and closed their doors. On July 12, 1982 just 43 days after closing the plant reopened. Employees were rehired, some management changes were made and tours rescheduled.

Mr. Grossman, the owner, had many exciting plans for the company but they were shortlived.

In 1984 the plant was closed for the second time, due to sagging sales. The company conducted several auctions disposing of their

museum room, current inventory, and the molds.

Many of the molds were purchased by well known glass companies. Some of the molds are currently being used with the Westmoreland trademark on them. Beware of Westmoreland reproductions. I have seen several animal dishes with the new Westmoreland mark misrepresented as being pressed by Westmoreland. These reproductions are of very good quality, but should not sell as high as the original Westmoreland. It behooves us all to study what colors and patterns were made by Westmoreland. It is becoming somewhat difficult to know who made what.

These are some of the mold marks Westmoreland used thru the years.



Westmoreland Specialty Company  
Early Mark  
Embossed in the Glass  
1910-1929



Current Mark  
Embossed in the Glass  
1949-Date



Paper Label  
1940-Date



Paper Label  
1949-Date

The Keystone with the W mark was initially used by the Westmoreland Specialty Company in 1910 and later used for a few years when the name was changed to Westmoreland Glass Co. in about 1929. That mark also appeared on the Company stationary during those years. The two paper labels shown were used starting in 1940 and 1949 as shown. The 1940 label is still on the Company letterheads today. The "WG" trademark imprinted on the glass has only been used since 1949.