

THE LYNDEBOROUGH GLASS COMPANY



This company grew from a mere vision in 1866 to one of New England's major manufacturers of bottle ware. It reached to Canada in the north to Augusta Georgia in the south at it's' peek. This is the story of the company and the glass that it made.

On June 27, 1866 a group of men petitioned the New Hampshire General Court to incorporate the Lyndeborough Glass Company at this time. Americans demanded light or aqua-colored bottles as opposed to green or black ones and these men knew of a large vein of quartz from which light colored bottles could be made from. The company purchased the land and the construction of the factory began. Soon it was discovered that another huge vein of quartz existed nearby that was over a hundred feet wide, ½ a mile long and 200 feet deep; this land was also purchased. The directors realized that this vein was too rich to be fully utilized by only this company. The New Hampshire Silex Company was formed to manufacture the quartz into sand for making glass, firebrick, etc. This company had ample capacity for meeting the demand of the Lyndeborough Company and those and many others in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey. The Union Glass Works in New Jersey used as much as 115 tons of silex in one month.

The main structure of the Lyndeborough Company housed the furnace which contained six pots or glass melting crucibles, connected to this there were four one-story sheds and in each were two brick lehrs (ovens) for the annealing process. Other building included a dry house for drying the sand, a mixing house where sand was measured and blended, a building for making pots for the furnace, a packing and storage warehouse and a blacksmith shop. For the actual blowing of glass, there were two hundred blow pipes, ten stone marvers, twenty bottle molds and 25 finishing tools.

On May 1, 1867, 13 glass blowers began the first day of blowing. Within three months the works produced \$500 worth of bottles a day at a cost of \$250. The number of blowers was increased to 17 and with 53 other men and boys they produced 6,000 – 7000 bottles and jars daily, varying in size from the largest demijohns to the smallest ink bottle.

At daybreak on June 15, 1868, the main building caught on fire. Fortunately for the company; its financial losses were minimal because of good insurance. It was not until December 1868 that replaced buildings were able to resume normal operations. In April 1869, another group from Lowell, Massachusetts purchased the company. In September of 1869 they had to replace the furnace making it necessary to close the factory for about three months.

This was a period of economic upheaval with the failure of the great banking houses of Jay Cooke & Company in 1873. There were many other problems too which wreaked havoc on the industry and New England's bottle factories were not an exception. In 1870, the New London Glass Company closed its' doors and in 1872, The Wellington Glass Company both in Connecticut, went out of business after more than 50 years. By the end of 1873, the four glass houses in Stoddard, New Hampshire as well as the Westford Glass Company in Connecticut were closed, leaving only the Lyndeborough and the New England Glass Company in Massachusetts, to manufacture bottle ware in New England. Lyndeborough did not go under because the new owners put additional money into the

business and also this glass company's ability to produce the aqua glass, kept the company competitive. So the Lyndeborough Company survived the panic of 1873, but, it still had problems. Operating costs increased to \$350 a day. Blowers averaged \$4.00 a day (some as much as \$8.00) – cost continued to rise which meant a big drop in profits. To help reduce costs in January 1873, a 40 horse power steam blower system was installed in the furnace to reduce the use of wood by using a mix of wood and coal. In 1879 and 1883, other changes were made to reduce costs and produce an even better quality of glass. In 1881, wood was completely eliminated and a combination of coal and oil was used.

This change caused several serious accidents – no one was killed but, some were burned severely. To avoid future accidents a new system was put in and by November 1882 they were using only oil costing 25 to 30 cents a gallon, ending forever the need for coal. The oil was shipped in by rail at a rate that hurt the company. By 1880, the cost for shipping oil and bottle ware was so high that Lyndeborough considered leasing the defunct Bay State Glass Works in East Cambridge, Massachusetts, unless the railroad reduced its' rates. In spite of all this, the Company accumulated so many orders that it was difficult to keep up when the blowing season started.

Some bottles were produced from colorless glass, but about $\frac{3}{4}$ of all the glass made here were various tints of green and blue aqua. They also ranged in color from olive green, citron green, green, emerald green, amber, cobalt blue, reddish amber and yellow amber. A clear, warm brilliant amber was the most common color. Based on brightness and the absence of bubbles or impurities, the quality was high. There are, however, some perplexing questions. On nearly all unembossed examples there are three characteristics on the glass surface. One is the appearance of someone having sliced slivers from the surface, some flasks have the look of having been made in a rusty mold and on others there is a graying effect. The embossed bottles, such as, "Hoods Sarsaparilla" or "Dr Kennedy's' Medical Discovery," do not show these marks, but have a polished look. Bottles produced at this works during the 1870's and early 1880's included beer bottles, carboys, demijohns, butter jars, rolling pins and phials of all sizes. Later in the 1880's containers for blacking, horseradish, wine, pickles etc were made. A large order worked on in 1880 was the Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound bottle. Other well known house-hold cures include, "Moxie's Nerve Food," "Hoods Sarsaparilla" and "Perry's Spinal Lotion." Wicker covering was used to protect demijohns and carboys – other large bottles were protected by wooden boxes. During the first week of November 1881, the company shipped its largest supply of carboys – 531 of them (capacity 13 gallons) and another 1200 carboys of various sizes, requiring four railroad freight cars. Many of the bottles blown in the late 1870's and early 1880 were blown by William Gileney, Frank Steel, John Gangloff, Richard Ross, W.W. Felton, Charles E. Dollerway, H.G. Hanover, George Ruffle and Ed Hall. Like all major companies, Lyndeborough had its labor problems and most were caused by efforts to reduce costs – an attempt to reduce or eliminate a practice that was once allowed. Some problems were caused as outsiders came to town to the jobs locals might have gotten etc.

By June of 1885, the company made insulators for the American Insulator Company and were the principal items produced – it is believed that these insulators may have been the last wares manufactured under the name Lyndeborough.

By January 1886, the factory was reorganized and was called the Crystal Glass Company, Charles W. Foster, President, George Ross, Factory Foreman. In April of 1886, the factory was again in operation, concentrating on blowing, trimming and packing fruit jars – they made pint and quart jars embossed on one side "The Puritan" and on the reverse "L S Co". It is not known what those letters stand for. There is also the thought that the Crystal Glass Company also made the jars embossed

“Lightning Putnam,” however; Henry W. Putnam received a patent of his own in 1882 for a “lightning enclosure” seal. The Lightning Putnam is found in amber and aqua and come in half pint to quart sizes.

The Company came to a halt in February 1888, two years after it reorganized J.D. Putnam died of apoplexy and no one else was interested in the factory. The company’s buildings were sold and removed one by one closing the glass industry in New Hampshire!

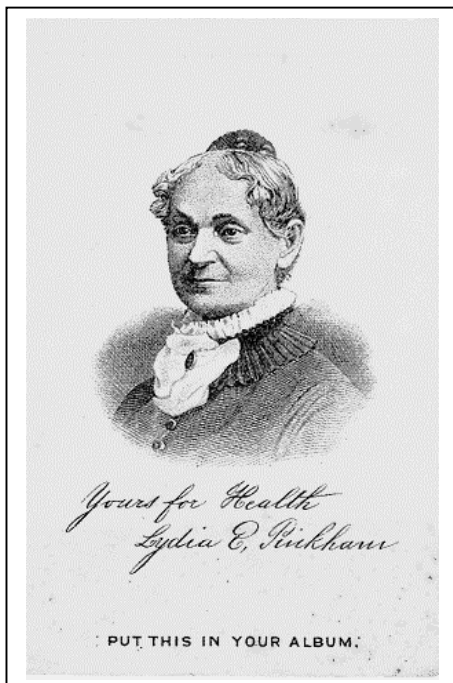
I first heard of this glass company from my friend and fellow collector Al Hickin who gave me a nice ½ pint amber flask marked on the base L.G. Co.

**Howard Dean
January 2007**

Note: Article by Carl Flowers, Jr.



The Lyndeborough Glass Company manufactured many aqua Lydia Pinkham’s Vegetable Compound bottles and amber flasks like the ones shown above. Many of the amber flasks made there have L.G. Co. embossed on the bottom of them.



**LYDIA PINKHAM
VEGETABLE
COMPOUND
TRADE CARD**

