



Glen & Steve Thistlewood, <http://www.carnival-glass.net/>

## Glassworks Josef Rindskopf at Kosten Revealed

**Until a dark and chilly day in February, 2004, when an unexpected phone conversation changed everything ...**

The conversation was with Professor Frederick Ridley. It was revealing, astonishing and quite frankly, mind blowing! For Frederick Ridley is the great grandson of Josef Rindskopf, and his memories and amazing family archive of unique photographs form the basis of this fascinating feature on the Rindskopf glass factories and their later connections. Most of the photographs you will see in this feature have not been published before. They form a unique historical record, not only to a great glassmaking heritage, but also in the context of the history of pressed glass manufacture. They show the factory floor, the buildings, the workers and their living conditions. They show processes and astonishingly complex machinery. They show the people, their clothing and their working conditions. They also provide evidence of previously unknown links to glass production in England. In total, the illustrations you will see on these pages, coupled with the text, give a picture of the production of pressed glass (including Carnival Glass) through the 1920s into the early 1930s through a photographic record like no other.

**Rindskopf Glass Factories and the Family**  
 Josef (1829-1890) and Fanny Rindskopf (nee Phillips) had six children:  
 Sidney (1859-1940)  
 Henry (1860-1892)  
 Albert (1861-1930)  
 Edwin (1862-1942)  
 Bertha (1863-1889)

Sherman (1865-1947) Josef Rindskopf was born in 1829, and went to America sometime in the middle of the 19th century. He married Fanny Phillips of New York and returned to Teplitz with her sometime around the 1850s or 1860s. At that time, Teplitz was in Bohemia, which was then part of the Austrian Empire. After 1918 it became part of Czechoslovakia and its name was changed to Teplice.

Teplitz was a spa town of some repute (though not quite as grand as Karlsbad or Marienbad) and a fair number of glass factories developed in the surrounding area. In

1876 Josef Rindskopf was co-owner, with some of his brothers, of the glass company Brüder Rindskopf. The family, a large one, was descended from Josef Rindskopf's father, Beer (1799-1876). Almost all of the family members changed their name to Riethof a hundred or so years ago.

In 1891, a year after his death, four of Josef Rindskopf's sons, Sidney, Albert, Edwin and Sherman (note their American/English names - Sherman was surely named after the American Civil War general) established a new company called Josef Rindskopf's Söhne A.G. (Josef Rindskopf's Sons) at Kosten. Soon after factories at Dux and Tischau (all near Teplitz) were added.

Initially, at Dux, much of the output was coloured blanks that were sent to glass refineries in Haida (Nový Bor) to be finished off (decorated, etched, painted etc). Within a year or so, however, all Rindskopf's glass was finished off at their own factories. At Dux, new equipment was installed so that etching, painting, sandblasting and so on, could all be carried out on the spot. Iridescent Art Glass, as well as Crackle Glass and Frosted items ("eisglas") were made at Dux. At Tischau, iridescent Art Glass in the fashionable Art Nouveau style was also produced. Much of the output, as with many of the other Bohemian glass factories at the time, was for export.

### Footnote:

Professor Ridley, whose photographic archive and family information is contained on these pages still remembers later visits back to the Kosten factory in Czechoslovakia. The pressed glass designs illustrated in the catalogs and books are also familiar to him from his childhood. He can recall from when he was around six or seven years of age, the hive of activity on the factory floor. The roaring furnaces, blasting forth heat. The workers carrying gobs of molten glass on the end of the punty rods - and then lowering them into the presses. He can also remember seeing workers carrying the pressed glass on iron rods to cool off in the lehns - and (delightfully) he remembers riding on the tracked small wagons through the shed where the glass was packed in crates.

**Modernisation at Kosten**

In 1903, the Rindskopf factory at Kosten was faced with re-building following a serious fire - the constant scourge of glass works. The opportunity was taken to construct a new factory, fully equipped with state-of-the-art machinery for efficient mass production of huge quantities of glassware. (The photos on the accompanying pages bear testimony to this - use the links at the foot of this page to view them all). The new factory had modern installations for the production of glass articles, its own water systems, high pressure ventilators, modern compressors and full facilities for semi-automatic glass production. Furthermore, there was in-house production of all their own iron moulds, as can be clearly seen on the factory photos. Almost certainly this is where Carnival Glass items were pressed and iridised, ready for export, alongside clear flint glass items, usually in the same shapes. Our studies (see the NetworK Czech Special for reproduction of part of the Rindskopf catalogs from the 1920s) revealed that a wide range of Carnival Glass was made by Rindskopf. Quite possibly this was an attempt to capitalise on a style of glass that was still enjoying general appeal in Europe at a time when the output from the USA had all but dried up.

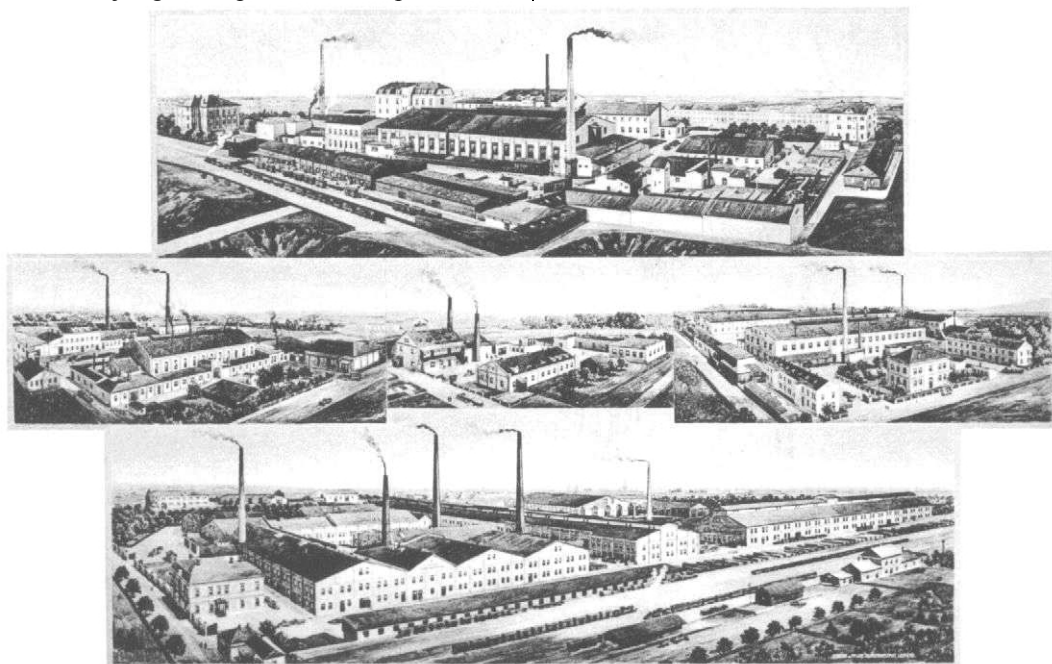
Modernisation was also carried out at Rindskopf's other factories, and the Art Glass lines were diversified with the introduction of more commercial items such as pharmaceutical glassware.

Some time around 1930, perhaps because of the financial problems that surely must have been associated with the large size of the undertaking then (or possibly because the surviving founding brothers had reached retirement age) the Rindskopf firm and its factories were taken into the Inwald company. Inwald was a large glass concern with factories in Teplitz (Rudofovahütte), Prague and elsewhere, and like Rindskopf, was a major glass exporter. Inwald produced

a range of exceptionally fine Carnival Glass, which you can read about in *A Century of Carnival Glass* and the *NetworK Czech Special*. (However, the presence of the two page advertising account of itself by Rindskopf in the Teplitz book referenced right, indicates that it must still have been an independent business of some sort in 1930). **More Changes**

Henry Riethof (son of Sherman) became a director of Inwald. Sherman and his family went to England when the Germans invaded Czechoslovakia, then left for South America in the early war years. His grandchildren studied in the U.S.A. and remained there as U.S. citizens, back in the land of their great-grandmother, Fanny Phillips.

The illustration above is from a book about Teplitz-Schönau, by R. Lodgman & E. Stein, published 1930. The book is a volume of articles on the town with advertisements at the end for local business. There are 2 pages for Josef Rindskopf & Söhne A.G. Joseph Riethof (son of Sidney) trained as an engineer at Charles University, Prague, and had been involved in work at the Kosten factory (for example, on improving the furnaces). In 1932 he went to England (for much more information on this see the section on the Molineaux Webb link) and represented Rindskopf Glass with a showroom in Hatton Gardens, London. Large amounts of Rindskopf factory glass were exported to England until the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, mainly in the form of inexpensive, pressed flint glass, but other sorts including coloured pressed and blown glass were also exported. Whether this was done under the umbrella name of Inwald for commercial transactions is not known. Inwald continued after WW2 as state owned under the Communist regime, and indeed, its derivative still operates today under the aegis of Avirunion, as Bohemia Crystal.



This is the illustrated postcard that shows several aspects of the massive glass manufacturing complex

that was known as Josef Rindskopf's Sons. The top and bottom views are of the complex at Kosten (Kostany).

The series in the middle shows the works at Dux (Duchov) in the two scenes - center and left. The scene on the right / middle row is of Tischau (Mstisov). The postcard is printed on the reverse in Italian and reads:

**GIUSEPPE RINDSKOPF FIGLI S.A.**

Fabbriche per vetrerie in Kosten, Dux and Tischau.

Uffici a Kosten presso Teplitz-Schenau  
(Cecoslovacchia)

Alla Fiera di Lipsia: Maedier Passage, bottega 26

**SPECIALITÀ ARTICOLI STAMPATI E SOFFIATI  
IN VETRO BLANCO**

Bicchieri con e senza manico, con e senza orio dorato,

portafiori coppe, insalatiere, saliere, brocche,  
portacenere, spremilimoni, sottobicchieri, burriere,  
atzate, tubi per lanterne, per lampade, tubi ordinari  
ed americani etc., etc.

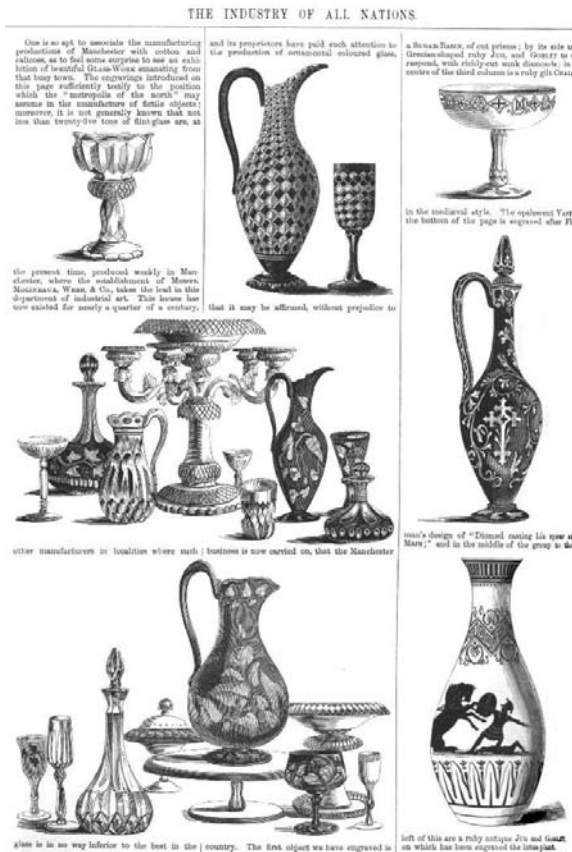
Representate per l'Italia Sig. Robert Springorum, Via  
Washington, MILANO The information on these pages  
will be updated as we continue to research, as well as  
receive feedback or more information.

**The story of the Rindskopf (and Inwald) agency in  
the UK, and the fascinating link with the Manchester  
pressed glass factory of Molineaux Webb, continues.  
Read on**

Glen Thistlewood, Frederick Ridley , <http://www.carnival-glass.net/>

## Molineaux Webb, Manchester, and the Rindskopf Connection

While much is known and documented about the nineteenth century English pressed glass factories that were located in the north east (such as Sowerby and Davidson), not so much has been documented on those companies from the second largest area in the country for pressed glass - Manchester. There were several companies in and around **Manchester** that produced superb pressed glass from the 1800s and (in the case of a few of them) into the early 1900s. **Burtles and Tate; Derbyshire; Percival, Yates & Vickers and Molineaux Webb**. The latter went through several name changes, originally starting up as Molineux & Co. They made a wide range of cut crystal and pressed glass, one of their best known products being the partly frosted Greek Key design. Molineaux Webb had showrooms in Hatton Garden, London - they also exhibited at the Great Exhibition in 1851 (see illustration, right).



Molineaux, Webb & Co . exhibited at the Crystal Palace Great Exhibition in 1851. Click the illustration to see the full page and read the text. **Ancoats**, where the glass factories were clustered, is one of the most important areas in Manchester's industrial legacy. Steeped in history, it was at the heart of the Industrial Revolution in the city, and indeed - has even been described as the world's first industrial suburb. Lying just to the north east of the city centre, the glass works and cotton mills were located either side of the Rochdale Canal. Both

labour and local fuel were plentiful and businesses thrived.

Though the early part of Molineaux Webb's history is reasonably well known, the latter years are not well documented at all. Some sources say it **closed in 1936**, while others note that the company became the **Manchester Flint Glass Works in 1933** (though this is unlikely as a 1925 Pottery Gazette ad actually listed the factory as Molineaux, Webb & Co. Ltd., Manchester Flint Glass Works, Kirby Street, Ancoats, Manchester). Other sources say the factory **closed in 1927**, while yet another source hedges its bets and states "the factory continued to work into the early 1920s." And this is where we take up our story . . . . in the later years of Molineaux Webb.

### The Riethofs arrive in Manchester

**Joseph Riethof left Czechoslovakia in 1932 for England**. His mission? To organise the revival of Molineaux Webb in Manchester. With him he brought his wife and young son, Frederick - and the family settled into a delightful house in the Stretford area of the city.

Recent research related to us by Peter Beebe (glass researcher in Manchester) suggests that the Molineaux Webb factory was working up to 1932 when it was sold to a Mr Skarratt and an American called Mr Hinney. The factory then reportedly stopped making glass and the **moulds were sold to Chance Bros in Birmingham**. The company then supposedly "imported glass and glass cutters from Germany. It only lasted a few years and then closed."

But what really did go on? Well, we know that Joseph Riethof stayed in Manchester with his family for around two years, and from stories later told by his wife, we also know that workers from the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia (Kosten) came to Manchester too. These workers and their families were German speaking (as Sudetens were) and this almost certainly accounts for the report in the previous paragraph of "German workers"....they were, in fact, Czech and had come over from the Rindskopf factory to work at Molineaux Webb.

But what of the factory purchase made by Messrs Skarratt and Hinney. How could this tie in with Joseph Riethof's mission? Very possibly what happened was a simple management buy-out, with experienced workers and management coming in to help get the project off the ground. Mr Skarratt had been a previous Representative of Molineaux Webb (according to a 1925 Pottery Gazette ad). Maybe Mr Hinney (the American) came into the deal as a financial backer, and links with the Rindskopf glass firm in Czechoslovakia brought in both labour and skilled management (Joseph Riethof).

The full story is impossible to know - maybe time and future research will unearth some more evidence to fill the gaps in our knowledge. What is uncertain is whether any glass - and indeed any Carnival Glass - may actually have been produced at the Molineaux Webb factory during the two years that Joseph Riethof was there. An item is known, in marigold Carnival, in a pattern that was shown in the Rindskopf catalog from the 1920s.....but it has BRITISH MAKE moulded on the base. Could it have been made at the Molineaux Webb factory when Riethof was working there?

On the photo pages linked to this article, you can see an astonishing archive of scenes from the Molineaux Webb factory on Kirby Street in Ancoats. They have been in the Riethof / Ridley family's possession since they had them taken in 1933/4. Undoubtedly they show the factory following a serious fire - so was this why the venture failed? The Riethof family moved to London in 1934, and Frederick Ridley recalls being told that the move south was "because the factory burned". Joseph Riethof took up a new role representing Rindskopf and Inwald at the Molineaux Webb showrooms in Hatton Gardens.

The move to London saw the family in Hampstead. His son, Frederick remembers certain things:

"What I do remember in Hampstead is the large china "pantry", with long shelves each side, as in the showroom.....full of glass! Plus a 14 foot built in dresser in the large kitchen with more glass in the lower part. Mostly pressed glass, some colored items."

The pressed glass designs illustrated in the catalogs and books are also familiar to Frederick Ridley from his

childhood - he recalls the catalogs and remembers seeing the name Molineaux Webb on the glass sample sheets that he played with as a child in London before the war. He still has a few pieces of glass from the old showrooms that are still in use.

#### Footnote

#### **A few final thoughts and musings from Frederick Ridley**

Many Riethofs (descendants of Josef Rindskopf and his many brothers and sisters) emigrated to other parts of the world quite early on; some escaped just before the war, several of them ending in the USA. Some of course, were victims of the Holocaust. I only went back twice - once in the 1950s and once later for a conference in Prague. The glass apart, there are few Rindskopf souvenirs (besides the photos). We do have a pair of silver candlesticks that are marked to commemorate the wedding of Josef Rindskopf's daughter Bertha, from her grandfather in New York.

The past is a foreign country in many ways. A long journey from Josef Rindskopf to Riethofs and Ridleys. My grandfather, Sidney, died in Teplitz. My grandmother, Sophie, was killed in Terezin. My father Joseph who served as an Austrian cavalry officer in the first world war (I have his medal "for exceptional bravery before the enemy") who studied in Prague, collected antiques, came to Manchester and moved to London, where I was brought up and studied. **Further reading on Molineaux Webb:**

**Charles Hajdamach, British Glass 1800-1914**

**Jenny Thompson, The Identification of English Pressed Glass. 1848-1908**

**Raymond Slack, English Pressed Glass. 1830-1900**