

Raccoon Forks Trading Company

Newsletter: Feb. 2018

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RACCOON FORKS TRADING CO. NEWSLETTER: FEB. 2018



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In this edition of the newsletter:

- RFTC's new '20th Century Antiques' room
- Cool new stuff: Iowa City Glass

Introducing RFTC's '20th Century Antiques' room!

Like 20th Century antiques? We do, too! We like the era and its styles so much we built a new room just to show off our collection. RFTC's 20th Century Antiques room features Mid-Century Modern, Art Deco, and American Arts & Crafts movement furniture, decorative items, collectibles and more. Stop by this weekend and check it out!



Cool new stuff: Iowa City Glass

In 1880, the Iowa City Flint Glass Mfg. Co. began in Keota, Ia., but shortly after moved to Iowa City, Ia., where it was incorporated on April 30, 1880. The company was started by R. J. Coulter, W. H. Brainerd, Ezekiel Clark, and J. Harvey Leighton—the only one of 10 investors with experience with glass production. Leighton had come to Keota in 1879 from Wheeling, W.Va., where he was a glass blower at Hobbs, Brockunier & Co.

Production started in the early summer of 1881. However, the early 1880's was a period of overproduction of tableware glass in the U.S. Competition from eastern factories was intense.

The Iowa City Flint Glass Mfg. Co. lasted only about 15 months before the plant closed and its limited assets distributed among creditors. Several railroad cars filled with glassware were emptied by creditors for nickels of what they were due. Pieces were given away as premiums by grocers.



The Iowa City operation was based on the idea that sand from along the Iowa River only needed to be shipped a short distance by rail, making it a very efficient, reliable source. But early glass made from the sand, the main ingredient in glass, had a tendency to shatter as changes in room temperature caused gas bubbles to seek release from within the finished product.

Better sand had to be shipped from Indiana at considerable expense, which proved financially disastrous. The plant was forced to make poorer quality products. And the poorer quality products did not sell well.

At its peak, the company employed about 150 people, and many came as experienced workers from eastern states, some reportedly sent by competitors as saboteurs. Many of the workers were said to be a bit rough around the edges and hung out at a tavern where the University of Iowa engineering building is now. Drunken brawls were common.



Other factories produced nearly identical pieces – sometimes from the same molds – making absolute identification as “Iowa City Glass” difficult unless accompanied by original wrappings or written certification. Identifiable pieces can command several hundred dollars each, and truly rare ones even more.

Animals were a central theme for the factory's patterns. Miscellaneous items made by the factory may include colored marbles, a geometric block wine goblet,



a Hat toothpick holder, a few lamps and glass canes. Goblets claimed to have been made in Iowa City include Sage, Deer, Elephant, Cat, Rabbit & Horse, & possibly Ivy Band, Cantilever & Garter Band. Most researchers conclude that only goblet in the Sage pattern were made in Iowa City.



Founded in 1812 by Emile Dobby (a French Canadian-Scots Irish fur trader) at the forks of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers, our mission for over 200 years has been to bring choice goods in from the wilderness to trade with the local population for whatever valuables they possess (including cash, checks, and credit/debit cards).



Emile immigrated to the U.S. in the early 1800s after being driven out of Scotland for his rogue and wile ways, which had led to charges that included horse thievery. After spending many years fur trapping in the American West, he started the original RFTC near our current location, at 621 Des Moines St. (in the NE corner of the East Village).

In our present incarnation we pledge to provide our loyal customers with high quality, carefully researched and curated antique and vintage furniture, furnishings, art, prints, etc., etc., etc.

Raccoon Forks Trading Co. is an Optimaef LifeServices small business. Optimaef creates jobs for individuals with disabilities and mental illness by developing and operating small businesses that provide high quality goods, services and economic benefits to communities. For more information, please click here:

<http://www.optimaeflifeservices.com/our-services/raccoon-forks-businesses/>

 <https://www.facebook.com/RFTCo/>

 Forward

Store hours:

Sun: 12 pm to 6 pm

Mon: 10 am to 6 pm

Tues-Sat: 10 am to 9 pm

Our mailing address is:

621 Des Moines Street

Des Moines, Iowa 50309

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