

Charley Bartlett, '17-'18, watches an endless stream of glass products emerge from the forming machines at Bartlett-Collins' plant.



## *Glass--Handled with Care*

*enthusiasms at Bartlett-Collins include the glassware it produces--and the Big Red*

SOME 40 years ago a book was published in Tulsa entitled *Men and Industry in Oklahoma in 1916*. The chapter on Sapulpa's year-old glass industry reads something like this:

"The Bartlett-Collins Glass Company, of Sapulpa, Okla., is the only glass factory west of Ohio and West Virginia that is making high grade pot and tank tableware.

"This factory is equipped with a twelve-pot furnace and a very large continuous tank. The goods produced include a full tableware line, ranging from the plainest heavy pressed goods to blown and cut glass, glass lamps, milk bottles, and packers' goods. There is also a very complete decorating department where gold deposit

ware is made. The factory has its own mould and machine shops, in which the most intricate moulds can be made. The buildings have about seventy thousand square feet of floor space, and occupy a five-acre tract of land. The buildings are of steel and are of the most modern constructions.

"There are about 240 employees at work in this immense plant in all departments. The sales territory actively worked is Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, New Mexico, Texas and Louisiana. Goods have been shipped into Seattle, Wash., and Minnesota, which indicates that there is still ample room for expansion.

"A branch office, show room and ware-

house are maintained in Dallas, Texas, and a show room and sales room in Oklahoma City.

"Bartlett-Collins glassware bears the trademark 'B-C' which will become a standard mark of quality in the west and southwest."

Unfortunately, the book never became a bestseller, but Bartlett-Collins went on to fulfill the author's prophecy of success.

The Bartlett-Collins Company is still the only plant west of the Mississippi making high quality glass tableware—only now the items are all machine-made rather than hand blown and pressed. Five hundred employees produced the 28,936,000 tons of manufactured glassware shipped to foreign



and domestic markets in 1959. Distribution covers the entire United States, Canada, the Caribbean area, Central and South America, Africa and the Far East.

Nerve center of this operation is a small frame building adjoining the factory, which in addition to serving as executive offices for the company, is also a source of Big Red sports information. Charley F. Bartlett, '17-'18, company vice president, is one of the most faithful Sooner fans on record. The walls of his office are papered with the current O.U. sports schedules, and a close search might even reveal one of the series of O.U. football glasses which Bartlett-Collins has manufactured since 1950.

Charley Bartlett was born in Oklahoma Territory a few miles north of Mannford. His father, H. U. Bartlett, moved the family to Sapulpa, county seat of Creek County, in 1913 because of his extensive holdings throughout the county. Soon after moving to Sapulpa, he and George F. Collins, an experienced glass man, established the Bartlett-Collins Glass Company. An older son, Edward E. Bartlett, now president and general manager of the company, joined the firm in 1916.

The next year Charley Bartlett went off

to Norman to study geology and pledged Beta Theta Pi fraternity. College ended for Bartlett when he and 40 other O.U. men traveled to Camp Taylor, Kentucky, to enlist. The army behind him, he turned to ranching in Colorado and then joined his father's oil operations before starting in the glass trade in 1931, working through most of the jobs in the plant.

Bartlett-Collins was located at Sapulpa because of the abundance of natural gas and the availability of a good grade of silica, the sand used in glass making. Also, the elder Bartlett had foreseen the opportunity for developing a substantial market for glassware in the southwest.

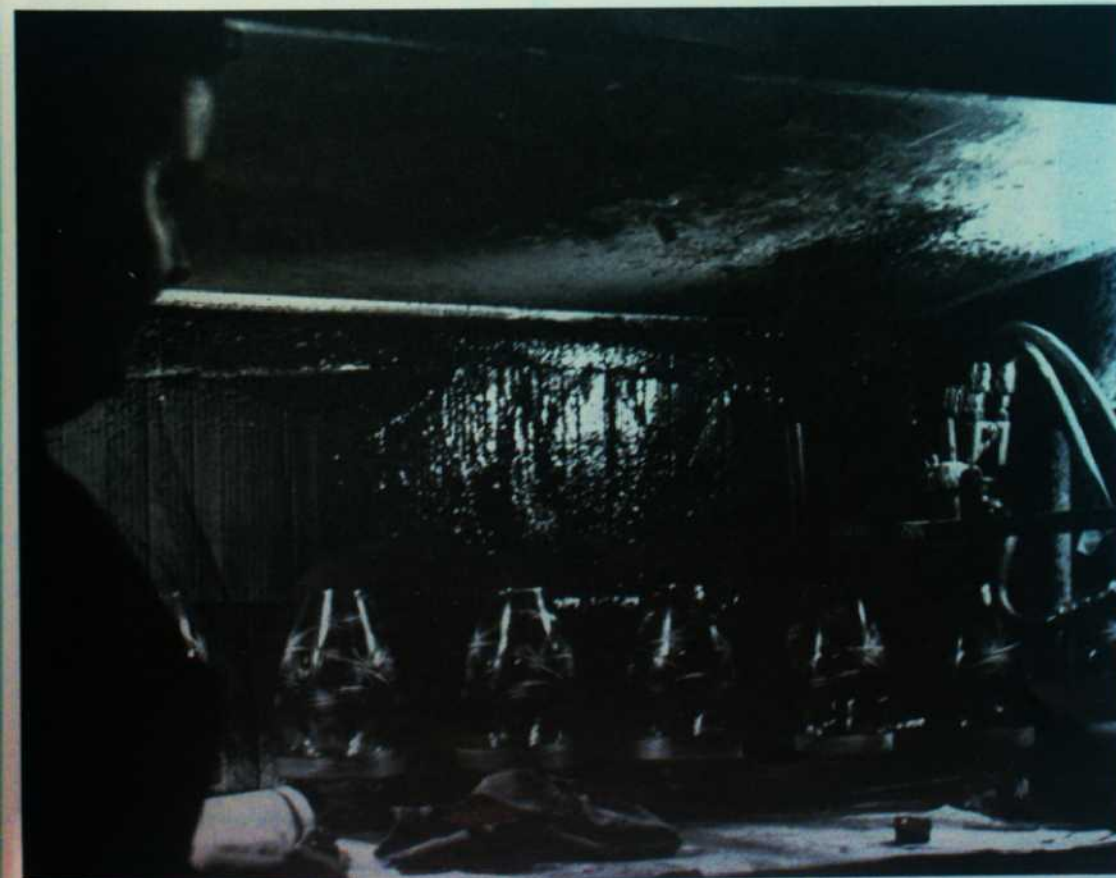
The work was all by hand until the 1920s when the first machine was installed. Hand production was discontinued in 1941. At the peak of the hand operation, Bartlett-Collins employed 120 skilled glass workers; two of them are still on the company payroll. Each group of these hand craftsmen working together to turn out a single piece of glassware constituted a "shop." Charley Bartlett estimates that if a shop could turn out approximately 50 to 60 dozen pieces a day, a machine can produce 80 such pieces per minute. In the four hours

required for four hand workers to finish 700 to 800 tumblers, a machine can produce 13,120.

The decorating is still done largely by hand with some mechanical assistance. The Bartlett-Collins design department turns out 25 new designs a year.

In addition to the tableware items, the company does a large volume in the special order category—beer glasses bearing the brewers' trademark, Kraft cheese glasses—a bubble bath manufacturer buys one of the B-C standard pattern vases to bottle his product. Three years ago Bartlett-Collins came out with an "Oklahoma Line" of home bar glasses. The 13-ounce double Oldfashioned glass was renamed the "Boomer" glass and the 14-ounce Zombie became the "Sooner" glass. Soon customers were asking for the glasses by their new names.

The O.U. autographed football glasses, sold only through the University of Oklahoma Association, started as souvenirs for Bowl game watching parties, and have remained more or less a hobby for Charley Bartlett—and for the countless other Sooner fans who have collected them as reminders of the Big Red greats of the past ten years.



Most glassware is decorated by hand or silk screen process. Then inside luster can be applied at a spray booth.