HISTORY OF THE GLASSWORKS: In 1780, Boston-born entrepreneur Robert Hewes erected the first New Hampshire glass factory in Temple, New Hampshire. He probably utilized German glass workers previously employed at the Germantown Glassworks, (1752-68) in Quincy, MA. The factory promptly burnt down, was rebuilt and then the furnace failed. In January, 1781 Hewes petitioned the New Hampshire Legislature to hold a lottery. Unfortunately, the lottery was funded with “New Emission Money” and when it failed, so did the lottery. By early 1782 the works were abandoned. With this history it would be surprising if any significant amount of saleable glass was produced. Historical records and archaeological investigations have documented production of bull’s-eye, (crown) glass of a fairly high quality. This would appear to be the first production of crown glass in America. Hollow-ware was advertised and archaeologic investigation, as well as numerous casual investigations of the site have yielded thousands of fragments in light green bottle glass as well as crown window glass. Several examples identical to the wine glass herein illustrated are known, matching archaeologic fragments and attributed to Temple with a fairly high degree of certainty.

Following the failure at Temple, Hewes was instrumental in establishing the Boston Crown Glass Company, on Essex Street in 1787, though it did not become successful until 1792. In 1802 it expanded by establishing the Chelmsford cylinder glasshouse. One of their labeled shipping crates is included in the exhibit. Subsequently, Hewes was involved in glass production in Connecticut.

THE OBJECT: Although similar to English examples, this glass has several features which set it apart from its English counterparts. The Temple example has an ogee bowl with a folded foot. In form it is very like an English glass c. 1760.1 However, the English example would have a plain foot, as they had largely discontinued the folded foot around 1750. Additionally, a folded foot is rarely seen on an English glass with an ogee bowl. English wines are fairly universally of colorless lead glass, whereas our example is of a brilliant light emerald green, as are the excavated fragments from the Temple site. This color is unusual for New England green glass, which tends to be much more muted in olive greens and amber. But for the Temple context, one might have thought the glass to be from Ohio where brilliant color is the rule. Several examples essentially identical to this example are known. One is illustrated in McKearin's Two Hundred Years of American Blown Glass where it is described as from “brilliant light green lead glass” and described as “New England area. First quarter of the nineteenth century.”2 “It would be surprising if these glasses were leaded, but that is something yet to be determined. McKearin's publication predates any valid archaeological investigation of the site. Other documented whole objects surviving from Temple are extremely rare.