

Is It Red Mountain, or Is It Not?

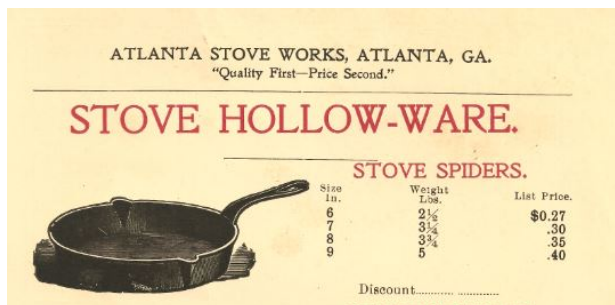
You have your latest BS&R skillet find, it is older, and the number size on the bottom looks like it was hand carved. You take pictures, you post them and ask what is this? And the answer will be a Red Mountain Series.

But are they correct?

Maybe. Maybe not. Is it a 6, 7, 8 or 9?

If it is, you need to do a little more work to be sure, as it might **not** be a Red Mountain (Regular Skillet).

The first skillets BS&R made were **NOT** called skillets, but **Stove Spiders**. They came in 6, 7, 8 and 9 inch. [The inch size let the consumer know what size eye hole on a wood/coal burning stove the Stove Spider (skillet) heat ring would fit].

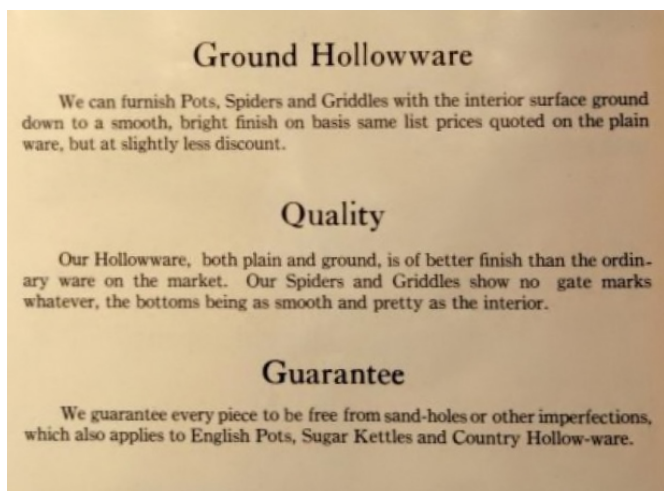


From Earliest Known Atlanta Stove Works Catalog 6

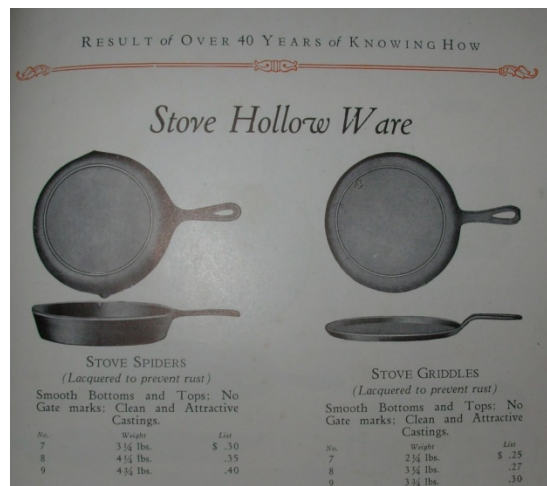
As you look through the old catalogs, do NOT let the catalog drawings fool you. That is a stock printer block of a skillet (Stove Spider) that the printer had and used. As it has been said many, many times, BS&R did NOT bottom-gate.

Let me preface that with: BS&R did NOT bottom-gate their Stove Spiders Skillets, nor their Griddles.

BS&R did use bottom-gating on larger items, i.e. sugar kettles, some country hollow ware, etc. but NOT on skillets or griddles. How do I know that? That is what the early catalogs boast. (See first picture below)



From Earliest known Birmingham Stove & Range Catalog



1932 ASW Catalog, showing no gatemark(s) on bottoms and only 3 sizes of Stove Spiders

So how do we tell a Stove Spider from the later Regular Skillet (Red Mountain)?

The earliest catalogs just give weights, handy for shipping, but not too helpful for a collector. The weights for the Stove Spiders listed in the earlier catalogs are:

6 inch is 2-1/2lbs.

7 inch is 3-1/4lbs.

8 inch is 3-3/4 lbs.

9 inch is 5lbs.

Not too helpful. Then in the 32 Catalog it only lists the 7, 8, 9 Stove Spiders with weights of 3-1/4lbs., 4-1/4lbs., and 4-3/4lbs., (the 6-inch Stove Spider is no longer listed and no Regular Skillets yet).

Thus far, it is not until the Red Mountain catalog that true measurements are given for the three remaining Stove Spiders.

7 Inch Stove Spider Top Dia. 9-1/2" Depth 1-7/8"

8 Inch Stove Spider Top Dia. 10" Depth 1-7/8"

9 Inch Stove Spider Top Dia. 11-5/8" Depth 2"

Now we have a way to tell if it is a Stove Spider or what the catalogs call a Regular Skillet (Red Mountain, ASW, etc.) by the difference in their sizes. **The Regular Skillet sizes are different than Stove Spider sizes.** The Regular Skillet & Stove Spider sizes are both listed in the Red Mountain Catalogs and in some of the other catalogs here on this forum to compare with. The Stove Spiders were produced, I assume, from the beginning and were last listed for sale on a dated 1941 pricelist.

BS&R Regular Skillets, Deep Skillets, (Red Mountain) didn't appear until the 1930's so there is some overlap. **Running from 1902-1941 would make the Stove Spiders BS&R's longest produced skillets.** With that long of a run, there should be many of them out there waiting to be found and identified.

So, if you have a BS&R Skillet size 6, 7, 8 or 9 that has their "Hand Scrawled Size" on the bottom, do what Cheryl Watson always said to do....measure, but accurately, as BS&R measured to the 1/16th of an inch. (Check Cheryl Watson's Skillet Measuring Diagram if you don't know how). Compare with the sizes in the catalogs, (this is why catalogs & paper are so important), and see what you have. Oh, yeah and let us know when you find them!

And be aware, as more paper, i.e. catalogs, brochures, price lists, ads, etc. become available, things may change, dates may move. That is what makes this hobby so interesting. But you have to have the old paper to keep the history true and honest. Thank you; Saunders Jones Jr., Hugh Rushing and Cheryl Watson.