

SALTY COMMENTS - #1
Observations and Opinions on Open Salt Collecting

We're off on a new adventure. After accumulating a number of duplicates while getting new salts for our collection, we decided to buy some intentionally for resale. This has expanded our hunting activities, has started to fill up space in a spare bedroom, but has not led to any bigger or better sources of open salt dishes. The attached list of salts for sale is our first. More will follow - how many will depend on our success in hunting and in selling.

As part of each list, we intend to include information from our research on open salts. We hope that it will help collectors to understand better what they have and what is offered to them. We will also use this as a forum to offer opinions and express points of view about this hobby. We will be careful to clarify where fact leaves off and opinion begins as much as possible.

One of our current projects is identifying and collecting Heisey salts. The Heisey Company started in business in 1896 and put out its last catalog in 1956. Much of their glass is unusually high quality, being clearer, smoother and with more sparkle than its competition. They made both shakers and open salts in the early days, but later abandoned salt dishes almost entirely. They started marking their ware about 1902, although not every piece had their "diamond H" in the mold. Some were sold marked only with stickers. We have been working with Louise Ream, Executive Director of the Heisey Museum who has a complete collection of the Heisey open salts. Thanks to her help we have a list of the known salts (21 individuals, 5 masters and one double) to work on. These are in crystal; a really complete collection would also include 5 more individuals in color, but no new shapes.

Looking for 27 specific salts less than 100 years old may not sound too difficult, but it has proven much harder than we expected. Some of the unmarked ones are very difficult to distinguish from similar dishes made by other companies. One has a shape that exactly matches a signed Higbee salt. Instead of the HIG bee on the inside bottom, it has a faint "diamond H" made by a mark etched with acid on the plunger of the mold. (If you have a Smith 1-3-2, H&J 2784, look closely on the bottom of the bowl.) Only a few of these are known today - we are still hunting for one. Some of the colored ones are rare also - the Revere tub (Smith 55-4-3, H&J 374) in cobalt blue and the Pineapple and Fan (Smith 165-4-3, H&J 3051) in green have each brought \$140-150 prices this year.

The #1121 salt (Smith 2-4-1, H&J 2709) has several look-alikes from other companies. We still cannot tell if one is Heisey without comparing it directly with a known copy. Louise Ream has one of these marked "diamond H", the only signed one we have seen. If you have a signed one, you are fortunate.

The double, or twin salt as Heisey called it, resembles one from Co-Operative Flint Glass Co. (H&J p.18, #239 Twin Salt). The two can be distinguished by examining the bottom pattern - the Heisey one has 14 rays while the other has 12.

The last open salt that Heisey produced was in the late Puritan pattern, originating in 1937. It is unmarked and hard to find. Many similar designs are available (Smith 261-1-1 is the general shape, H&J 3250 may be one of them). Some were sold as pressed; others had one or more of the faces polished. The pressed ones are 1-7/8" square at the top, 1-1/4" square at the bottom, and 15/16" high. They have steeper sides than the one pictured in Smith, and come only in crystal. This was a challenge to find - we looked at literally hundreds of larger and smaller dishes like it before discovering a pair at a mall in Georgia.

Our list of Heisey salts as it stands today is as follows:

<u>Heisey Number</u>	<u>Smith Number</u>	<u>H&J Number</u>	<u>Heisey Pattern Name</u>	<u>Individual/Master</u>
325	164-5-3	2697	PILLOWS	I
331	1-4-3		COLONIAL PANEL	I
341	196-1-1		PURITAN (Early)	I,M
351			PRISCILLA	I,M
353			MEDIUM FLAT PANEL	I
379	82-1-3	2969	URN	I,M
393	82-1-2	2845	NARROW FLUTE	I
429	17-2-2	2959	PLAIN PANEL RECESS	I
1116			Twin Salt	I
1121	2-4-1	2709	Salt Dish	I
1183	55-4-3		REVERE	I
1200	84-4-3		CUT BLOCK	I
1201	83-1-3	2673	FANDANGO	I
1205	83-4-2	2674	FANCY LOOP	I
1205	271-4-2	3833	FANCY LOOP	Celery Dip
1220	472-4-1		PUNTY BAND	I,M
1225	8-3-1	2560	PLAIN BAND	I,M
1235	169-4-3	2672	BEADED PANEL & SUNBURST	I
1255	165-4-3	3051	PINEAPPLE & FAN	I
1469	9-1-1	2741	RIDGELEIGH	I
1489		3250	PURITAN (Late)	I
-	1-3-2	2784	Salt Dish	I

There are several salt-size dishes that Heisey catalogs list only for other uses. These include:

<u>Smith</u>	<u>H&J</u>	
11-1-2	466	Ash Tray - OLD SANDWICH pattern
26-1-1	2626	Ash Tray, also Individ. Jelly
54-1-1		Nut dish, CRYSTOLITE pattern
77-5-1	219	Indiv. Jelly - RIDGELEIGH Pattern

There is also a pedestal nut dish in the Medium Flat Panel pattern which is marked "diamond H" and is in some collections. We rationalize that someone must have used these dishes for a salt sometime, since they are too cute to let go.

There seems to be at least one salt incorrectly attributed to Heisey. The Fine Prism dish (Smith 82-3-2, H&J 2614) is cited as Heisey in H&J, but the Museum disagrees. There is no record of it in the Heisey catalogs, and the Museum says the glass is not the Heisey quality on our dish like this.

We have a beautiful master salt in mint condition which we bought with a Heisey paper label on it. The Museum agreed that the quality of the glass is up to Heisey standards, but pointed out that anyone can buy or print labels. They know of no reference to it in the old Heisey lists or catalogs, and until one shows up, our "find" will have to remain a "maybe".

Besides the plain salts themselves, decorated versions are sometimes found. We have the Revere tub with engraved sides and the early Puritan with a silver overlay. This embellishment was not necessarily done by Heisey - they supplied salts to various decorators over the years. If you want to collect the decorated versions, it could expand your search significantly. Although there are many old catalogs of Heisey items, we know of no way to trace the number and type of decorations that have been added by others.

A study of the tableware patterns shows the rise of shakers and the demise of open dishes. Our reference book (see below) shows the picture as follows:

NUMBER OF NEW PATTERNS

Year	With Only Shakers	With Shakers and Open Salts
1896-99	7	8
1900-09	12	6
1910-19	4	2
1920-29	3	0
1930-39	7	2

All but three of the open salts that Heisey made were part of a set of tableware. All such sets also offered shakers, or salt bottles as they were first called.

We are still hunting for six more Heisey shapes. Later we might even try for all the colors. We will be competing with Heisey collectors, many of whom specialize in "Heisey Little Things". In the meantime, we are putting together a paper giving descriptions, illustrations and information we have gathered about Heisey open salts. We currently plan to publish it in some form by next spring.

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REFERENCE: For pictures of the Heisey patterns (but not the salts), see "Heisey's Glassware of Distinction", written and published by Mary Louise Burns, revised 1978.