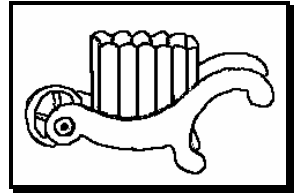


Salty Comments

Facts and Opinion about Open Salt Collecting



Number 57

February 1997

Glass Figural Salts

They started to show up in quantity in the 1870's as far as we can determine. In her book, "Victorian Glass", Ruth Webb Lee called them novelties, and pictured match holders, paperweights, toothpicks and - you guessed it - open salts. Today we call them "figurals" because they are shaped like some animal or object. They are still popular today as collectible items rather than tableware. The modern glass ones are mostly made in color, with some firms making a new color every few months expecting collectors to buy it to keep their set complete. John Degenhart carried this approach to the extreme - there are at least 220 colors in a complete set of his owl figurines, and some colors are so close to each other that it takes an expert to identify them accurately.

When we first decided to write about figurals we found there were too many to include in a single Salty Comments. To narrow the field we decided to concentrate on glass ones made before the turn of the century (December 31, 1900 - we're purists on the date the century ends). We still could not cover all we found, so we're covering mostly those whose makers and dates we are sure of. During this period most glass tableware was made in crystal, but a few colors began to creep in for the novelty items. The three usual ones are amber, blue and vaseline. Some milk glass was made by a few companies, but there are not very many 19th century salts in this color.

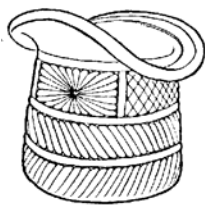


Figure 1
Blown Hat



Figure 2
Lafayet Boat



Figure 3
Block Boat



Figure 4
Pittsburgh Boat

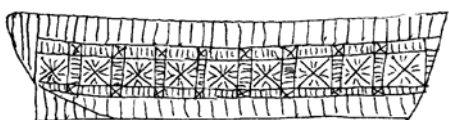


Figure 5
Sowerby Boat

The first of the glass figural salts were blown hats which were made around the end of the 18th century (Figure 1). A number have survived, but they are expensive because many collectors specialize in this early blown glass. Their exact shape varies with the pattern and maker because they were made freehand and by several glass houses. The first standardized shapes to show up are the boat salts of the lacy period. Several of these are marked, which is unusual for the 19th century. These marks establish the maker quite clearly. The Lafayette boat made by the Boston & Sandwich Glass Co. and shown in Figure 2 has "Sandwich" on the bottom and "B & S Glass Co." on the stern. The shape was reproduced by Pairpoint for the Sandwich Museum a few years ago. The repro cannot be confused with the old one because it has "SANDWICH" rather than "LAFAYET" on the paddle wheel.

Sandwich also made a boat with a row of crossed blocks on the side about the same time, shown in Figure 3. Both of the Sandwich boats come in blue and opalescent colors; the Lafayette one also comes in a silvery opaque blue. It is not surprising that the colored ones are worth \$500-1000.

The next boat, Figure 4, has "Pittsburgh" on the stern, and was made by the Stourbridge Flint Glass works, founded by John Robinson. The English made boats near the end of the century. Their glass of this era is easy to identify because it has a registry mark which tells the maker and date. The one shown in Figure 5 is Sowerby , 1886.

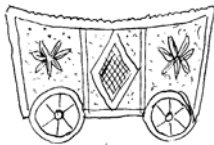


Figure 6
Lacy Wagon



Figure 7
Lacy Sleigh



Figure 8
Sleigh Salt



Figure 9
Toboggan Salt

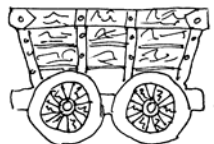


Figure 10
Coal Wagon

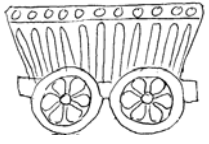


Figure 13
Coal Wagon

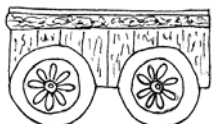


Figure 12
Farm Wagon

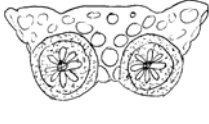


Figure 13
THOUSAND
EYE Wagon



Figure 14
Barouche

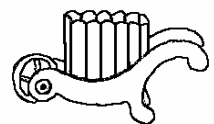


Figure 15
Adams Barrow
Salt



Figure 16
BARLEY pattern

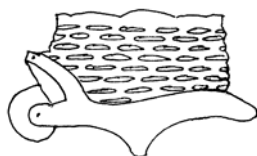


Figure 17
Greentown Wheelbarrow

Besides the boats, Sandwich has been credited with making wagon and sleigh salts during the lacy period (Figures 6 & 7). Both are very rare, and have brought \$1000 and up during auctions. Surprisingly the Barlow and Kaiser book on Sandwich glass does not list them. Evidently no shards of these shapes were found during the extensive digging at the old factory, and we now consider them "maker unknown".

There is another shape of sleigh which is not so expensive. It is shown in Figure 8, and it comes in the usual amber, blue and vaseline colors. We have seen it with a rose sprig on the side and also with basket-weave sides. We don't know who made it or when, but we feel quite certain it belongs in the Victorian era.

Moving on in the transportation category, the sleigh leads to the toboggan salt, Figure 9. This is illustrated in the Heacock & Johnson book, page 16, as part of a celery and olive set. It is also a rare shape - Patti Johnson wanted to buy ours when she examined our collection in 1988. The category includes two coal wagon designs made in England, figures 10 and 11. These have marks which date them as 1880 and 1893 respectively. There are also farm wagon salts like Figure 12 in 2 different lengths (3-1/4 and 3-5/8") which come in the Victorian colors but whose origin and dates are currently unknown.

Still in transportation are the THOUSAND EYE carriage by Adams and the barouche by Central Glass (Figures 13 and 14). The first of these shapes has been copied by L.G. Wright, but he put a DAISY AND BUTTON pattern on the outside. All the carriages we have seen with bullseyes are old. The barouche comes in both an individual and master size according to the old catalog. We have never seen an old large one, but Wright made a copy of it in a number of different colors. The small one has never been reproduced to our knowledge.

Still in the wheeled vehicles category, there are at least two wheelbarrow salts with a moving metal wheel. This is usually pewter with a steel axle, and was attached while the glass was still hot as it came out of the mold. The Adams one shown in Figure 15 comes in clear, white and blue milk colors. It is scarce, to say the least. The other one with the BARLEY pattern, Figure 16, is also by Adams, and was granted patent #12,647 on January 3, 1882. The inventor is listed as J. Dalzell, who worked for Adams until 1893, when he left to help found Dalzell, Gilmore & Leighton in Findlay, Ohio.

A more common wheelbarrow is the one by Indiana Tumbler & Goblet, better known as Greentown Glass, Figure 17. This is much sought after by Greentown collectors. It comes in a variety of colors, the most unusual of which are chocolate and Nile Green. Several firms have tried to copy the chocolate color in recent years, but none have really duplicated it. Their results are usually a caramel slag rather than the true chocolate that Greentown achieved. The Nile Green has a reputation as being very difficult to make. We do not know of anyone who has even tried to duplicate it. The result is that the Greentown wheelbarrow in this color is worth about \$300 when you see one for sale.

(3)

The shape was reproduced by Joe St. Clair, with his signature in the bottom of the bowl, and was made in a large number of colors. In 1984 when we visited his factory the caramel slag ones were selling for \$1.50 each. After he died the price shot up to about \$25, and has stayed there since. In recent years the Gibson Glass Co. bought the St. Clair mold and ground off the signature and ran the shape in several colors. The last time we visited they had retired the mold because it was too hard to use. We have another wheelbarrow similar to the coal wagon and shown in Figure 18. It too is English and dated 1893.

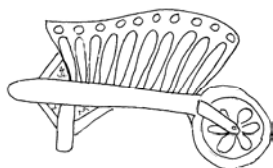


Figure 18
English Wheelbarrow Salt

The bird with seed salt, Figure 19, is the most widely reproduced figural we know of. The original was made by McKee Glass, and is shown in their 1889 catalog in both individual and master sizes. We have seen it in the three Victorian colors as well as clear, with both protruding eyes and flush eyes. It was first copied by Degenhart, and his mold has passed on to the Boyd Co. About 10 years ago the Kanawha Glass Co. made a copy from their own mold, and another copy is now being made overseas and imported. We covered the differences we see between the American versions in Salty Comments #17 and #19. The imported one is closest to the old one. The only real difference we have defined so far is that the imported version is fire polished so the protruding eyes are rounded on the ends. We know it comes in pink, blue and green so far. Their blue is not the same shade as the Victorian one. There is also a bird without seed which is scarce and has a smaller base than any other one. We have yet to track down its origin, but we're sure it is old.

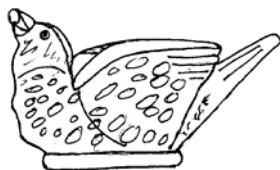


Figure 19
Bird with Seed

One old bird salt that has not been copied exactly is the flying bird by Richards & Hartley, Figure 20. There is a modern version, maker unknown, which has a berry in its mouth, shown in Heacock & Johnson #934. Also in the bird category are the "Just Out" salts. The first of these, Figure 21, is shown in Ruth Webb Lee's book. We've never seen one - perhaps you can be lucky and find it. The second, Figure 22, was issued by U.S. Glass in 1898. This comes in the Victorian colors, and is hard to find without at least one chip on it. It is quite heavy, so when it is dropped it usually sustains some damage. The third bird is the swan pulling a shell boat, Figure 23. It also was copied by Joe St. Clair in a variety of colors, including some that are iridized. As we mentioned in Salty Comments #11, we can tell the difference by looking at the straps the swan has in its beak. The old version has flat straps - the St. Clair one has lines in the straps. The St. Clair mold has been acquired by the Bittersweet Glass Co. and we have yet to establish what they are doing with it.



Figure 20
Flying Bird

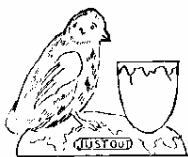


Figure 21
Just Out #1



Figure 22
Just Out #2

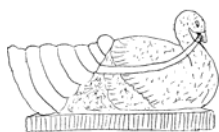


Figure 23
Swan Boat

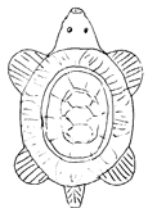


Figure 24
Hobbs Turtle

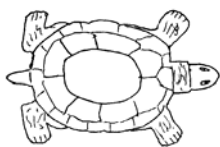


Figure 25
Bellaire Turtle

There are three old salts that have turtles. The first two are just a turtle with a salt bowl in its back. The Hobbs, Brockunier one, Figure 24, comes in both clear and milk glass, and is hard to find with all the projecting parts unchipped. The Bellaire Goblet one, Figure 25, is very scarce. Ours is amber, but there are other colors in existence. The last salt with a turtle is in the WILDFLOWER pattern, Figure 26. It has a boat-shaped bowl sitting on a turtle's back, with the pattern on the sides of the bowl. Here again the



Figure 26
WILDFLOWER pattern salt

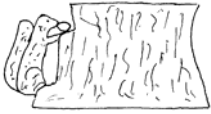


Figure 27
Portland
Squirrel



Figure 28
Gillinder
Squirrel



Figure 29
Tree Stump



Figure 30
Tree of Life



Figure 31
Gladstone Bag

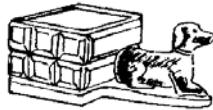


Figure 32
Dog & Cart

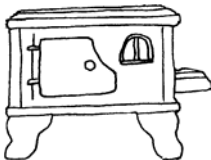


Figure 33
Stove Salt



Figure 34
THREE FACE

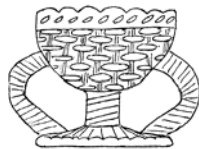


Figure 35
Atterbury Baskets - Ind. & Master



Figure 36
GOOD LUCK Pattern - 3 sizes

feet, head and tail are very vulnerable, and a mint one is uncommon. L.G. Wright made a copy of this one also, but he used a ribbed oval base which was easier to mold than the turtle.

There are two old squirrel salts from this era, both with the animal on the side of a tree trunk. The first shape, Figure 27, has a vertical tree is attributed to the Portland Glass Co., which operated in the 1870's. It comes in both an individual and a master size. The second, Figure 28, was made by Gillinder and features a slanting tree trunk. This latter was copied by Guernsey Glass Co. of Cambridge, Ohio, and can be identified by a very faint "B" lying on its side along the bottom of the left side. It comes in a variety of colors which were not used in the Victorian era. A third tree-related salt is the tree stump whose origin we have yet to find (Figure 29). We have not seen this in color. The last in this area is the TREE OF LIFE salt by Portland Glass, Figure 30. It is the one we use in our masthead, showing a nest in the crotch of a tree with the word "SALT" embossed on it. It is not rare, but it is popular and thus relatively expensive.

A really rare salt is the Gladstone bag one shown in Figure 31. It was made by the Libbey Co. at the factory they built for the 1893 World's Fair, and is embossed "World's Fair Libbey Glass Co." and has a tag marked "1893" on the side. It was produced at the Fair and handed out as a souvenir item. Evidently few survived, because the Corning Museum had never seen one before when we showed it to them.

Two more old figural salts by Central Glass are the dog and cart (really a square box, not a cart) and the kitchen stove (Figures 32 and 33). Both come in color as well as clear. In her 1944 book, Ruth Webb Lee says the dog was widely reproduced, which may account for it being more common than the stove today. This does not make it any less desirable so it is somewhat expensive. The stove is even more so, selling in the \$150 ballpark.

About 1875, Duncan produced the THREE FACE tableware pattern which proved very popular. A number of the open salts have survived (Figure 34). They were copied by L.G. Wright about the middle of this century. The copies lack the square blocks around the rim when compared to the originals.

The Atterbury Co. did a big business in milk glass during the 1870's. The two figural salts they made - an individual and a master - are shown in Figure 35. Each can be found with two patent dates marked on the bottom - 1874 and 1875. We also have them with only the first patent date, which makes us think the dish was made in the year between the patents.

The GOOD LUCK tableware pattern has a horseshoe theme, and there are 3 horseshoe salts that go with it as shown in Figure 36. Whether the two smaller sizes really were part of the tableware set is open to question, but they fit nicely. The small one appears by itself in an old O'Hara catalog and again in an Adams catalog; we have yet to find out who made the two larger sizes or the tableware set.



Figure 37
DAISY &
BUTTON Hat



Figure 38
Bandmaster's
Cap



Figure 39
Straw Hat Salt

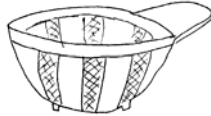


Figure 40
Jockey Cap

We started with hats, and we'll end with them. The U.S. Glass catalog for 1891 shows the "Ind. Hat Salt", the "Little German Band Cap" and the "Ind. Sailor Hat Salt" shown in Figures 37-39. All come in color. The DAISY & BUTTON one is being made currently by Fenton; we don't know how to tell theirs from the original. Summit Art Glass has made a straw hat salt, but theirs is larger (4-1/4" vs. 2-3/4"). Also in the hat category is the Jockey Cap salt, Figure 40, whose date and origin are unknown to us. It is scarce, and many collectors are looking for one.

If you want to concentrate on the older figural salts, you can get a very impressive collection. We know of one couple who are trying to get one of each color of all of them. They have acquired many over a multi-year period, and their collection is not only impressive but beautiful to see. They have been willing to pay the full value to get many of them. Others have been lucky finds where the seller did not appreciate what he had. Like anything else, if you really set out to accomplish something, the results can be great.

We know we omitted two boats, the cradle, crossed logs, Pilgrim shoes and maybe one of your favorites, but we've got to stop somewhere. We hope you have several in your collection already, and that if you see one for sale in the future you will appreciate what you are looking at. After all, they are at least a century old and some of them were actually sold as salts.

Ed Berg
401 Nottingham Rd., Newark, DE 19711

References:

- "Victorian Glass", by Ruth Webb Lee
- "The Glass Industry in Sandwich", by Ray Barlow & Joan Kaiser
- "Degenhart Glass & Paperweights", by Gene Florence
- "5000 Open Salts", by William Heacock & Patricia Johnson
- Ten books, "Open Salts Illustrated", by Alan B. & Helen B. Smith

References for Salts Pictured

| Fig. No. | Description | Approx. Date | Company | H&J No. | Smith No. |
|----------|--|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Freehand Hat, pattern molded | 1800 | | | |
| 2 | LAFAYET boat | 1835 | Sandwich | 456 | 396-5-2 |
| 3 | Boat with crossed blocks on sides | 1835 | Sandwich | | 361-1-2 |
| 4 | Boat with PITTSBURGH on stern | 1835 | Stourbridge Flint Glass | | 396-5-1 |
| 5 | Boat with sunbursts on sides | 1886 | Sowerby, England | 4634 | 325-4-2 |
| 6 | Lacy wagon | 1840 | | | |
| 7 | Lacy sleigh | 1840 | | | |
| 8 | Victorian sleigh | ? | | 3734 | 397-1-2 |
| 9 | Toboggan | 1891 | O'Hara | | 397-4-2 |
| 10 | Coal wagon, wood sides | 1880 | W.H.Heppel England | | |
| 11 | Coal wagon, ribbed sides | 1893 | Henry Greener, England | | |
| 12 | Farm wagon | ? | | 2084 | 472-2-2 |
| 13 | Carriage, THOUSAND EYE pattern | 1885 | Adams | 860 | 407-3-1 |
| 14 | Barouche (old carriage) | 1880 | Central Glass | 417 | 45-3-3 |
| 15 | Wheelbarrow, vertical rib sides | 1891 | Adams | 4679 | 356-4-1 |
| 16 | Wheelbarrow, BARLEY pattern | 1882 | Adams | | 224-1-1 |
| 17 | Wheelbarrow, basket-weave sides | 1900 | Greentown | 4669 | 325-4-1 |
| 18 | Wheelbarrow, ribbed sides | 1893 | Henry Greener England | 3733 | 292-5-2 |
| 19 | Bird with Seed (indiv. & master) | 1889 | McKee | 997 | 297-2-1 |
| 20 | Flying bird | 1891 | Richards & Hartley | 3755 | 462-5-1 |
| 21 | "Just Out" salt - chick standing beside bowl | | | | |
| 22 | "Just Out" salt - chick emerging from egg | 1898 | U.S. Glass | 1027 | 362-1-2 |
| 23 | Swan pulling shell boat | 1892 | Mosaic Glass | 3751 | 44-8-4 |
| 24 | Turtle, bowl in his back | 1875 | Hobbs, Brockunier | 3758 | 54-4-3 |
| 25 | Turtle, bowl in her back | 1890 | Bellaire Goblet | 993 | 120-5-2 |
| 26 | WILDFLOWER pattern, oval bowl on turtle's back | 1885 | Adams | 364 | 204-3-3 |
| 27 | Squirrel on vertical stump, indiv. & master | 1870 | Portland Glass Co. | 3757 | 53-1-2 |
| 28 | Squirrel on slanting tree stump | ? | Gillinder | 4671 | |
| 29 | Tree stump | ? | | 3359 | 53-5-3 |
| 30 | TREE OF LIFE, nest in tree crotch | 1870 | Portland Glass | 3581 | 53-5-2 |
| 31 | Suitcase, embossed World's Fair | 1893 | Libbey | | |
| 32 | Dog beside BLOCK pattern box | 1880 | Central Glass | 3405 | 44-4-3 |
| 33 | Kitchen stove | 1880 | Central Glass | 473 | |
| 34 | THREE FACE pattern | 1875 | Duncan (Pittsburgh) | 4429 | 56-1-3 |
| 35 | Basket-weave bowl on pedestal, (indiv. & master) | 1874 | Atterbury | 4466 4482 | 40-4-1 387-5-1 |
| 36 | Horseshoe (3 sizes) | 1876 | O'Hara, Adams and ? | 3740-2 | 53-4-2 |
| 37 | DAISY & BUTTON hat | 1885 | Duncan (Pittsburgh) | 844 | 56-2-2 |
| 38 | Bandmaster Hat | 1885? | Duncan (Pittsburgh) | 862 | 85-3-3 |
| 39 | Sailor hat (straw hat) | 1885? | Duncan (Pittsburgh) | 550 | 207-4-2 |
| 40 | Jockey cap | ? | ? | 5015 | 253-5-1 |