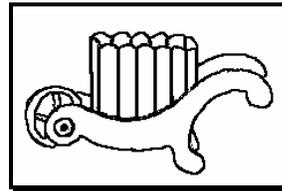


Salty Comments

Facts and Opinion about Open Salt Collecting

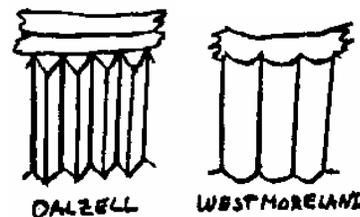


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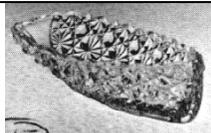
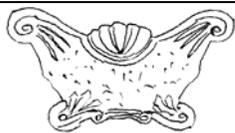
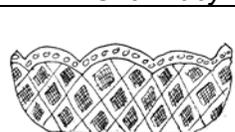
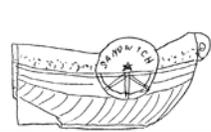
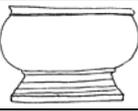
Categories

When we write about a subject, we sometimes find new information that changes what we have said. Of course we never make mistakes! Fortunately Cheryl Wachsmuth knows her euchre salts and reads Salty Comments. She found a genuine boo-boo. In issue #63 we said that the Westmoreland euchre salts had triangular prisms on their sides while the earlier (Dalzell) ones had rounded ones. This is exactly backwards – Dalzell is triangular and Westmoreland is rounded.. We would appreciate it if you would make the correction in the fourth paragraph of your copy of #63, if it is still available.



We have one other item to cover before we get into the current topic. The other day we got a present in the mail from Jim and Marlene Nelson. It was a vaseline DAISY AND BUTTON boat (Figure 1), with the letters MMA in the bottom. These stand for Metropolitan Museum of Art, and mark it as a repro sold in their gift shop. Jim and Marlene remembered how we had been burned in the past when we sold a MMA repro of a oval lacy period salt without realizing what it was. We couldn't find any differences between the MMA one and an unmarked one in our collection. Someone must have located an old mold for the purpose. Fortunately the Metropolitan has put their mark on all their gift shop salts.

Other museums have also issued copies of old open salts, properly marked. The glass ones that we know of include the two other MMA salts (Figures 2 and 3), the Strawberry Diamond lacy made by Fostoria for the Henry Ford Museum (marked HFM) (Figure 4), and the Lafayette boat by the Sandwich Museum, which has "Sandwich" instead of "Lafayet" on the paddlewheel (Figure 5). Several pewter copies of old silver salts have been sold by Colonial Williamsburg, all bearing their CW logo. Two of these shapes are shown in Figures 6 and 7. There probably are more – we haven't seen any record of their gift shop activity. The museums seem to be conscientious about marking their repros – we wish all the commercial firms felt the same way.

	
Figure 1 MMA Boat	Figure 2 MMA Shell Lacy
	
Figure 3 MMA Oval Lacy	Figure 4 HFM Lacy
	
Figure 5 Sandwich Boat	Figure 6 Williamsburg Repro
	
Figure 7 Williamsburg Repro	

Open salt collecting is a hobby that can grow on you. It starts out with a few that you find attractive, and then one by one the collection expands until you have displays all over the house. This isn't necessarily bad – each of our salts has something special about it, and we're seldom ready to replace it to make room for another one. At the same time, each new salt has to meet an increasingly higher

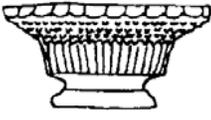
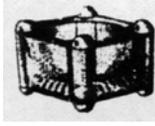
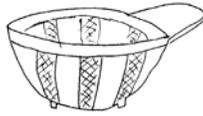
standard to earn a place in the cabinet. We no longer buy a new one just because we don't have it. There has to be something special about a salt we find before we pull out our wallet.

One way to limit where the collection is going is to focus on one or more categories. This lets you have specific goals when you go salt shopping, reduces the pressure on cabinet space, and helps research your finds with fewer books to study. Even if you don't want to part with ones you already have, it's fun to specialize in one particular category to see if you can learn about it and maybe get all the ones that fit in it. In this issue we'll try to cover some categories that might be of interest.

The first one that comes to mind is colors of a specific shape. For the older salts there are a limited range of colors, but for those produced in the last 50 years the number of them can be quite large. The Degenhart book shows 38 colors of DEWDROP AND STAR salt (Figure 8), and Boyd is making still more. We have collected colors of the LOTUS salt (Figure 9), issued by Westmoreland and more recently by Summit Art Glass. We have 34 of them so far. In the MOSS memo, the newsletter of the Midwest club, Ed Bowman is undertaking a survey to establish the known color ranges of a few of the known shapes. So far he is soliciting inputs on the scallop shell salt (Figure 10), the duck (Figure 11), the Gear salt (Figure 12) and the Cabinet salt (Figure 13). Results of his surveys are in the MOSS Memo newsletter and will be distributed at the 1999 Convention. Even for older salts which come in the standard crystal/amber/blue/vaseline color range, it can be a challenge to find all of them. How many of you own (or even have seen) the Jockey's Cap (Figure 14) in each of these colors?

One category needing attention is the varieties of a single basic shape of open salt issued by many glass companies. You'll never find out who made which one, but someone needs to establish how many different Octagon (Figure 15), Cincinnati (Figure 16) and square glass (Figure 17) salts there are. We started to collect different ones of these early on, but got lured away to other areas before we got very far. We would be happy to share our collection of these varieties with anyone wanting to do serious study of this topic.

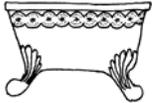
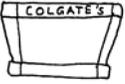
Figural salts are always interesting and in demand, but again there are many different things depicted. Quite a few people are attracted to birds, like hens, ducks, and especially swans. If you try to get one of each shape swan there is, you will have a very large collection without buying anything else. This particular bird has been one of the most popular over the years, and has been made in glass, china and silver with many different colors, decorations and poses. Some are still in production, like the Cambridge Type I swan that Boyd Crystal Art Glass is reproducing in a variety of colors (Figure 18). The Westmoreland duck (Figure 19) has also been made in many colors, and the mold is now being used by Summit Art Glass. Fortunately their color range is not nearly as large as Boyd's.

	
<i>Figure 8 Dewdrop & Star</i>	<i>Figure 9 LOTUS</i>
	
<i>Figure 10 Scallop Shell</i>	<i>Figure 11 Polished Duck</i>
	
<i>Figure 12 Gear Salt</i>	<i>Figure 13 Cabinet Salt</i>
	
<i>Figure 14 Jockey Cap</i>	<i>Figure 15 Octagon</i>
	
<i>Figure 16 Cincinnati</i>	<i>Figure 17 Square glass</i>
	
<i>Figure 18 Cambridge Type I Swan</i>	<i>Figure 19 Westmoreland Duck</i>

In the area of figurals, the transportation category is one with fewer modern versions but many older ones that are in demand and hard to find. Examples of these are wheelbarrows, carriages, sleighs, wagons and the syrup bucket on a sled. A complete collection of these would range from the lacy sleigh salt by Sandwich (last auction price we saw was \$3700!) (Figure 20) through the glass wheelbarrows with pewter wheels (like Figure 21 and the one shown at the top of this newsletter) to the recent sleigh being made by Mosser in Cambridge, OH (Figure 22). One of the older specialized areas is the lacy salts, made from 1825-1850. The enthusiasm for these was started by Ruth Webb Lee, who wrote several books on Sandwich glass in the 1930's. These led to the Early American Glass Collectors Club and people getting interested in lacy salts as well as other lacy shapes. The work by Dorothy Neal and her husband in 1962 led to the book, "Pressed Glass Salt Dishes of the lacy Period", which is the bible for all lacy salt collectors. It also focused attention on lacy salts, so collecting them now requires the backing of a sizeable bank account, especially if you want buy colored ones. We have a number of lacies in our collection, but are not trying to get examples of all there are.

	
<i>Figure 20 Lacy Sleigh</i>	<i>Figure 21 Wheelbarrow</i>
	
<i>Figure 22 Mosser Sleigh</i>	

Another interesting area is pattern glass, which was most popular in the last half of the 19th century. If you just look for pattern glass masters, you can have a lifetime search because some of the designs are seldom seen. The goblet shape is most common (Figure 23). We have over 120 like this, and we're not trying very hard. Some of them come with lids (Figure 24), some are flint glass, and there are few repros to worry about. A separate category is the masters which have matching individual shapes, like our favorite BANDED STAR pattern (Figure 25). There are fewer of these, but you will still be competing with pattern glass collectors to find them. If the shelves aren't high enough, go after pattern glass individuals. We were surprised to find that we have over 250 crystal ones in the collection, plus a bunch more in color. Your Heacock and Johnson book can give you good guidance for this – see the list of patterns on page 22.

	
<i>Figure 23 Ribbed Ivy Pattern Master</i>	<i>Figure 24 WAFFLE Pattern Master</i>
	
<i>Figure 25 BANDED STAR</i>	<i>Figure 26 Caster Cup</i>
	
<i>Figure 27 Dentist Cup</i>	<i>Figure 28 Pomade Jar</i>
	
<i>Figure 29 Avon Jar</i>	<i>Figure 30 Tooth Powder</i>

A fun category is the "Wannabes", sometimes known as "Learning the Hard Way". One section of our cabinets is devoted to this type, and everyone who visits likes to see it. Our first "salt" like this was a caster cup given to us by one of our children in the early days (Figure 26). (Maybe it was made to protect the rug under furniture legs, but it could have been used for dipping celery if you wanted!). Others include a dentist's cup (Figure 27), a pomade jar (Figure 28), a cut-off Avon jar (Figure 29), and a dish for tooth powder (Figure 30). This latter one we bought on purpose – it looked so much like a salt that we couldn't resist it. We told of several more in Salty Comments #53, which detailed some of our "Buying an Education" experiences.

A real challenge is to pick an old factory and try to get one of each kind of salt they made. Many of these firms have been covered in previous Salty Comments, and in no case have we been able to find everything their old catalogs show. Our first real effort was with the Heisey Company, which is not as old as some, being founded in 1895. We did a lot of research at the Heisey Museum about 15 years ago, and identified (we thought) all the salts that they had ever produced. We counted 34 of them, but after years of looking have been able to find only 29. Our results were the basis for our first “Salty Comments The remaining ones have given us something specific to hope for when we’re out hunting, but it will be years between finds. Heisey isn’t the only company that is a challenge, however. When a Company already has a collectors organization, joining it is a good way to start.. Fostoria, Duncan, Cambridge, Imperial Westmoreland and Degenhart come to mind immediately., Summit, Mosser, Boyd, and Guernsey have no organization we know of, but the Companies are currently active and might be willing to help in any project you would undertake

If you want to travel, you might specialize in salts made overseas. These can often be found in this country at antique shows. The earliest European salts that are reasonably available are British silver, an example of which is in Figure 31. They can be identified and dated by their marks. British glass includes freehand blown salts with rigaree like Figure 32, and pressed salts by Sowerby (Figure 33), many of which are shown on pages 277-283 of the H&J book. Some of these have an English registry mark which also is a good means of dating. English china is also collectible, and there is an excellent book by Godden with an extensive list of marks used.

European salts other than English are not nearly as well documented. There are glass lacies, from France, Belgium and possibly Finland. Other French glass, especially doubles, are shown in the back of H&J, pages 284-291. China salts with French, Austrian and Czechoslovakian marks are quite plentiful. Pre-Revolutionary silver salts from Russia, like Figure 34, are in a class by themselves. They show outstanding craftsmanship, but also command an outstanding price. German salts by Meissen are also available and expensive.

Salts from Japan are plentiful, but ones with an “Occupied Japan” mark are not. Noritake collectors are looking for Japanese salts too, which depletes the supply of the nicer ones. A collection of these would include a lot of small trays for celery dipping, like Figure 35.

Some people collect china salts for a particular decoration, like roses or violets (Figure 36). Just confining yourself to one particular flower can get you a nice variety without involving any high-price purchases (well, not at first anyway). Our collection has about 60 shapes with one or more roses, and we haven’t even been trying.

One interesting category is breakfast and condiment sets, like Figure 37. These are open salts plus. The plus is usually a pepper shaker and napkin ring on the breakfast sets, with a mustard pot instead of the napkin on the condiment sets. Sets with the napkin ring were used in Victorian days when the maid



or butler brought your breakfast on a tray in the morning. You ate it in bed while they laid out clothes for you to wear. We were born into the wrong family, 100 years too late!

A few people prefer to specialize in silver or silver plate. Solid silver has a lot of books published about it, and the salts are usually well marked to identify the maker and sometimes the date. A few collectors have focused on Gorham salts, which are covered in great detail in the book by George and Carolyn Tompkins. Beyond Gorham, there are a great many other makers. Names like Kirk, Paul Revere and George Jensen (Danish) are sought after by silver collectors, but salts by less well known silversmiths bring more reasonable prices. The extreme case we have seen was a salt with inlaid rubies marked Faberge. As we remember, the price was \$1500 – we didn't buy it. Silver plate is more reasonable, but there are fewer books and the figural types are relatively expensive.

We have rambled on and still haven't covered all the categories we could think of. We've probably missed your favorite – sorry about that!. In any event, ask yourself what particular kinds of open salts fascinate you the most, and learn more about them. When you are out hunting, make an effort to find at least one of that type, If you want to learn more about it, we'd be happy to share any information with you that we have. With a little study and a lot of hunting you can become an authority. Maybe you can start publishing a Salty Comments of your own, or at least write an article for your club's newsletter!

Ed Berg, 401 Nottingham Rd., Newark, DE 19711
email: edandkay@compuserve.com

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"Handbook Of Gorham Open Salt Dishes", by George and Carolyn Tompkins
"Pressed Glass Salt Dishes of the Lacy Period", by L.W. and D. B. Neal
"Early American Pressed Glass", by Ruth Webb Lee
"Encyclopaedia of British Pottery and Porcelain Marks", by Geoffrey A. Godden