

View from the Salt Box - #35

The little salt spoons that some people collect are closely allied with our open salts. They are not plentiful, and often are unrelated to the salt that they are in. Some of the people that collect these spoons, don't care at all about open salts. We offered about 200 of them for sale once, and had a phone call from a lady that wanted to buy them all. We told her no for the moment, because we had just sent out the same list to over 50 other people and we wanted everyone to have a chance to get at least a few. After 3 weeks passed, we sold all that were left to her, and she was very happy.

Salt spoons can be found in a variety of materials. The most common ones are the glass spoons, which can be bought in quantity from ads in the antique newspapers. Two of these are on the right in Figure 1. The other two in Figure 1 are the only glass ones we know of that can be positively attributed. They are from the salt and pepper set in Imperial's CAPE COD pattern. The Fleur-de Lys on the handle matches the handle of the set, and the spoons show up clearly in the Company's catalog.

The real focus of salt spoon collecting seems to be silver ones. Here the individual sizes are often marked by the maker, or the design of the handle is special. Some were made to match a set of sterling tableware - we once found several Gorham ones that belonged to a silverware pattern collected by George Tompkins' daughter. We believe most of the silver companies made them in the past, and we have seen ads where some are still being made today. To say that one of them belongs in a particular salt dish is speculation in most cases, even though the marks on the salt and the spoon are the same. There are two cases where we believe positive identification is possible - when there is a catalog picture showing the salt and spoon together, or when the design of the spoon relates to the design of the salt. Examples of this latter are shown in Figure 2. The two enameled spoons on the left have a design and colors that match the French and Russian salts they came in. The pewter and wooden ones on the right have the appropriate Viking theme to match their Viking boat salts.

The most intriguing ones to us are "shaker" spoons. If you do not have a steady hand or have not practiced a lot, you will find it is hard to spread salt evenly, even with a cute little salt spoon. The ones shown in Figure 3 solve this problem by letting you use the spoon as a salt shaker. There are small holes which let you sprinkle the salt over whatever portion of your meal you desire. They wouldn't have worked on a damp day 100 years ago when salt picked up moisture from the air, but after free-flowing salt was developed in the early part of this century they certainly are a good idea. We're not spoon collectors, but we do have a soft spot for ones like this. They don't take up much room on the shelves, either.

We hope you have a few special spoons in your open salt collection. We also hope you try them at least once at the dinner table to see what it's like to handle one. We're on a low-salt diet ourselves.

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

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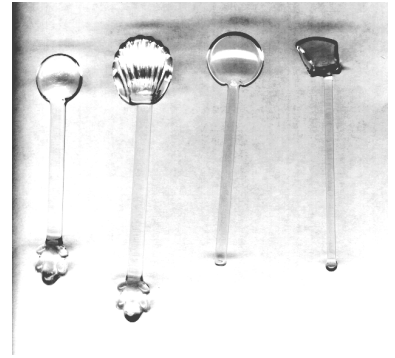


Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3 (Top View)



Figure 3 - Bottom View