

MOSSY COMMENTS - #2

The other day we were asked if there is a place to donate a collection of open salts where they would be displayed. The lady asking the question did not want to sell her beautiful collection of over 2000 dishes, but was willing to give them to a place where they could be seen by others. Unfortunately we don't know of any such spot

Our experience in talking with museums is that they will accept collections but aren't interested in making commitments about what they will do with them. With tax laws as they are, many people donate their collectibles and get a tax writeoff. The Museums we know do not have any empty cases waiting. They have much more put away in storage than they can display at any one time. The only way they can be induced to give a particular collection priority is if a cash grant comes with it to pay for constructing the necessary building additions and showcases. Even then, the type of collection may not fit their particular field of emphasis. A group of silver salts would not fit in the Museum of American Glass in Vineland, NJ, for example.

We have made several donations to museums which have gone on display, but only because they were directly in their area of interest. When we first visited the Heisey Museum in Newark, OH, we were distressed by relatively few open salts in their cases. We sent a group of Heisey salts from our inventory, and they were happy to put them on display and give us credit. The Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, NY is interested in documented material - glass where the maker is definitely known from old patents or old catalog pages. In the past we have given several such salts, and they put some on display. When we gave them we had no guarantee they would squeeze any into their crowded showcases, but we knew they appreciated them and probably would not sell any.

Our view of the situation is necessarily limited, since we have worked with only a few of the better-known museums. Perhaps you know of some small organization with empty showcases that would like to mount a permanent display of special open salts. If you do, please publicize it. There are people with large collections who might help fill them.

Our own point of view is influenced by Ray Barlow, the expert on Sandwich glass. He has collected it for over 50 years, and was quoted in American Antiques magazine as saying, "Why spend all this time collecting it so a museum can just lock it behind glass doors? If it all ends up in museums, no one can collect it. I've had a lifetime of enjoyment collecting it, and I want the next generation to be able to do the same". We agree. We'd like to see our BANDED STAR master salt and similar scarce ones in the hands of another open salt collector rather than in a glass showcase somewhere.

Like most collectors, we want others to see, appreciate and learn from the dishes we have found. The way we do this is to display them in our home and invite others to visit when they can. We also bring special ones to Club meetings for Show and Tell, for exhibits or in displays. When we pass on to the Great Antique Shop in the Sky, we hope that our salts will go to other collectors where they will be appreciated. There ought to be a dandy auction - we wish we could be there.

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