

MOSSY COMMENTS - #11

According to what we have read, in Victorian times it was popular to bring home a small conversation piece when you went on vacation. Some of the souvenirs were salts, or at least dishes which could be used as salts after your friends had seen them. We decided to look through our collection for these, and were surprised how many we found.

We read about these pieces in a British book, so we were not surprised to find a number from England. The most numerous were heraldic ware, with the coat-of-arms of a town on the side. We have several of these salt-size dishes, but our favorite has got to be the one from Northwich (Figure 1). It is a salt mining center, and their motto is "SAL EST VITA", salt is life. We also found two condiment sets from that country. The first is a boat with "A Present From Cleethorpes" on the side. This sent us scurrying for the atlas where we found that Cleethorpes is on the east coast of England at the mouth of the Humber river. Undoubtedly a vacation retreat. A second condiment set is a touring car marked "Greetings from Dudley". This town is a suburb of Birmingham, not at all what we expect as a vacation spot, since we associate the Birmingham area with steel-making, mining and other heavy industry.

We found three salts from the USA which qualify as souvenirs. The first is a china basket in the shape of an orange with a flowery vine handle, and is marked "Florida" (where else?). The second is shaped like a fish and marked "Atlantic City". It must be old - if it were modern, it would be shaped like a slot machine. The third is a porcelain pedestal salt with a decal of the US Capitol inside and a Noritake Nippon mark on the bottom. We have seen this picture on a number of china shapes, all of Japanese origin.

We have two French souvenir salts, both doubles. The first is china and is shaped like two fish facing outwards so their tails make a handle. It has two Marseille scenes on the sides - the Chateau D'If which was made famous in the book, "The Count of Monte Cristo", and the cathedral of Notre Dame de la Garde, a city landmark. The second salt is glass with a miniature Eiffel Tower for the handle. The bowls have pictures of the Arc de Triomphe and Le Sacre Coeur cathedral in the bottoms. The handle has a tag marked Dorure Veritable, which we think means Genuine Gold (Plated). It is the kind sold at the 1902 Paris World's Fair.

The final two salts we selected were from Norway. The first is a pottery girl with two baskets on her back and a large "Bergen" written on her dress. It doesn't say "Norway", but where else is there a Bergen? The other is one of the many Viking boats. This is the usual shape, but it has a picture marked "Nordkap" (North Cape) on the bottom. It shows the cliffs, a sailing boat, and since the Cape is way above the Arctic Circle, it shows the midnight sun near the horizon.

We hope you have some souvenir salts in your collection and that they help you learn new things about the world. This happened to us when we wrote this column. Open salt collecting is educational!

	
<i>Northwich Salt</i>	<i>Cleethorpes Set</i>
	
<i>Greetings from Dudley</i>	<i>Florida Basket</i>
	
<i>Atlantic City Fish</i>	<i>U.S. Capitol Decal</i>
	
<i>Marseille Fish</i>	<i>Eiffel Tower</i>
	
<i>Bergen Girl</i>	<i>North Cape Mark</i>