

SALTY COMMENTS #27
(Facts and Opinion on Open Salt Collecting)

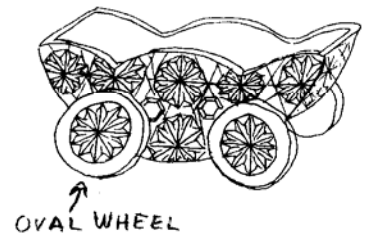
One of the most exciting parts of open salt collecting for us is finding new information about when and where specific dishes were made. Although we are interested in all kind of salts, we have done the most work in identifying contemporary production and comparing it with the old. Recently there have been several "finds" in this area, and we now know the exact difference between reproductions and the originals. We will use this issue to pass on the information. This will force us to refine what we have found into verbal descriptions, and will also put it on the record for the future.

One important find was made recently by Bethy Estes Barrios, of Salida, CA. Several years ago we found a 1976 sales catalog from the A.A. Importing Co. when we were digging through the Corning Museum. It offered a "set of 6 spectacular famous salt dips in shapes of perambulator (we call it the open carriage), spittoon, anvil, cradle, frog and wheelbarrow", in assorted colors. We copied the sheet for reference, but could do nothing more about it without seeing the actual dishes. Recently Bethy found a set of these, minus the spittoon, in its original rice paper box. Each dish had the original "A.A. Importing Co., St. Louis, Mo., Made in Korea" label, and the box was similarly identified. She kindly lent the set to us so that we could study and compare, and now we are able to distinguish most of the Korean dishes from others made previously. Sketches of them are shown on page 4. In the descriptions that follow, we have tried to focus on one or two features that can be easily seen without needing a second dish for comparison.

DIFFERENCES

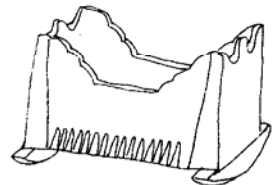
Carriage

The very old one has a THOUSAND EYE pattern, which has rounded hobnails all over. L.G. Wright made the same shape with a DAISY AND BUTTON pattern, which was probably the model for this one. The Korean carriage has 3 of the 4 wheels distorted into oval shapes. Wheels on the other carriages are round.



Cradle

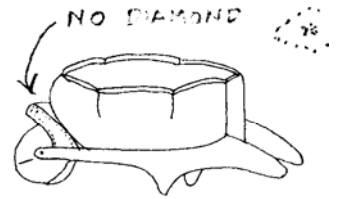
We don't know who made the old one, but the posts on one end are 1/4" shorter than the on the other. All 4 corner posts on the Korean cradle are the same height. The new cradle has 14 "ribs" along each lower side; the old one has 19.



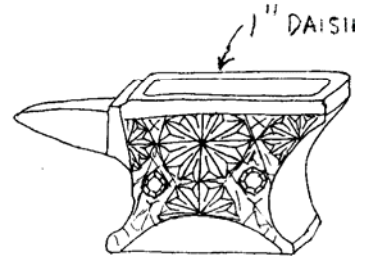
BOTH ENDS SAME HEIGHT

Wheelbarrow

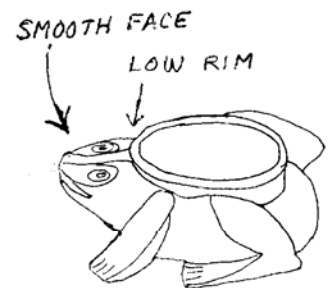
The source of this design is controversial. The older version has a diamond made with tiny dots in the center of the front, like the basket-weave one (sketch at right), and some say it could be Greentown glass. This has never been substantiated, and Greentown collectors do not believe it. The back of the bowl is rounded on the older one. The Korean one has no diamond, and the back end is vertically straight.

Anvil

This was probably copied from the L.G. Wright version, but we do not have one of his for comparison. We have a similar DAISY AND BUTTON anvil with daisies about 5/8" across and a rayed bottom, but we don't know its origins. The Korean one is amethyst, has 1" daisies, a solid horn, and is hollow underneath.

Frog

We know of 3 versions of this open salt. L.G. Wright made one with a high bowl. Its rim is about 3/16" above the back of the frog's head, while the rim on the other 2 is about level with it. The differences between the old frog and the Korean one are hard to describe in words, but are obvious if you have them side by side. In the dark and dusty back room of an antique store, the best thing to examine is the top of the frog's head. The old one has some texture on it, probably intended to resemble frog skin. The Korean version is smooth with no sign of texture on the surface.

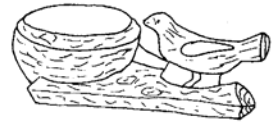
Spittoon

We're looking - it may be a while before we find one, either new or old. So far all we have to work from is the picture.



The Korean salts are hard to price, although they are less than 20 years old. Any figural salt costs \$5.00 brand new today. These are out of production and should be worth more than that. The Wetzel Holly salt was made about the same time as these, and is listed in H&J (#910) at \$20. Right now we would pay that amount for a carriage because we don't have one, and want to display it beside the older version. Whether anyone else would value it that highly remains to be seen - the supply is very limited, and we have no feel for the demand.

A second identification of new vs. old was made by Maxine Mittelstadt of Rochester, NY. She has one of the original bird-on-a-branch salts which Mosser copied, illustrated on page 4. She also found a picture of an amber one in Clark W. Brown's "Supplement to Salt Dishes" - his #2298. Since the book was published in 1941, long before Mosser went into business, there is no question that the design was originated by one of the old glass companies.



Maxine loaned us her old bird so that we could see the differences. There are quite a few - there is no doubt that two different molds are involved. The easiest way to tell them apart is to look at the stub end of the branch. The Mosser dish has wood grain there - like the rings of a tree. The old dish has a flat surface - no sign of any grain. There are a number of other differences, but none as easy to describe in words.



Some day we hope to discover who was the first to make this bird-on-a-branch salt. A dealer once told us it was Sandwich, but the Sandwich Museum has no record of any bird salts ever being made there. It is the type of Victorian novelty dish that was made in the late 1800's - we hope to find a picture of it in the pages of an old glass company catalog.

A third confusing area was untangled by Clyde E. Ingersoll in the February 1990 issue of the Cambridge Crystal Ball, the newsletter of the Cambridge Glass Collector's organization. He and his wife collect swans, and recently did research on the changes in the Cambridge swan molds from their original form to the present day. The 3" swans were first made in 1928. Since this is well into this century, the swans may never have been sold as open salts. Clyde lists them as mints, nut dishes, and ash trays. They look nice in our collection though, so we prefer to think that someone used them for salt sometime. The Cambridge production is divided into 4 types, designated as I, II, IIIA and IIIB. The first three each used a different mold. The last, type IIIB, is the same as IIIA except that the dish was widened with a flaring tool while it was still hot.

The mold for the type III was purchased by Mosser many years ago, and was reworked enough to make their swan distinguishable from the original Cambridge. The mold for the type II was converted to type III, and no longer exists. The type I mold is now being run by Boyd, and all of their swans are marked B in a diamond. If you want to identify a 3" Cambridge-style swan, just follow the diagram, on the next page, referring to the sketches shown.

We have used several things to distinguish Cambridge swans in the past, but never did a thorough job like Clyde Ingersoll. We have stubbornly maintained that you cannot tell anything from the position of the head because the neck was twisted by hand, with results that vary from batch to batch. His work confirms this, and teaches us better ways of identification than we knew. All glass collectors are indebted to him for publishing his findings.

With the clues in this letter, you can now examine your salts like the ones we have discussed and learn more about them. We hope you can identify all of these kinds that you have, and will get some pleasant surprises when you do.

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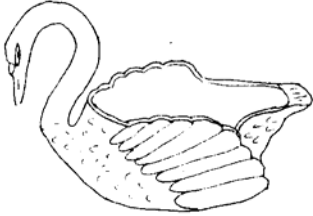
March 1990

References: "5000 Open Salts" by William Heacock and Patricia Johnson
"Cambridge Crystal Ball", February 1990, Cambridge Collector's Club

IDENTIFICATION DIAGRAM

CAMBRIDGE - MOSSER - BOYD SWANS

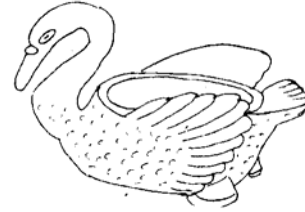
TYPE I



TYPE II



TYPE III



Is it marked M or B?

- yes --> Mosser

M OR



OR



no

Boyd



Are wing tips low?

- yes --> Cambridge Type I

no

From the back, is the left foot as big as or bigger than the right?

- yes --> Mosser unmarked



no

Can you feel a depression in the front part of the wings?

- yes --> Cambridge Type II

no

Is bowl widened and are wings flared out? (2-1/2 wide at wing tips)

- yes -> Cambridge Type IIIB

no

Cambridge Type IIIA (2-1/4" wide at wing tips)