

VIEW FROM THE SALT BOX - #4

We often encounter antique dealers who claim a salt is "Sandwich", "Heisey" or something else special when they really don't know. They guess at the origin to justify selling the dish at a high price. Much less frequently we find someone guessing that a salt is less desirable than it really is. We know a collector who bought a blue Greentown wheelbarrow for \$8.00, and was assured that it really wasn't old. Times like this are memorable, and unfortunately rare.

We bring up this subject because we recently bought the 1990 edition of Schroeder's "Antiques Price Guide". It has prices for about 250 open salts, keyed to H&J numbers. The listings on Cambridge swans caught our eye because we just finished doing an article on them in "Salty Comments". There are two Crown Tuscan listings:

Swan, Crown Tuscan, Cambridge, HJ-935	\$100.00
Swan, Crown Tuscan, unsgn, repro.	\$20.00

This surprised us, because the history of the mold that made the H&J 935 swan is well known. It went from Cambridge to Mosser, where it was reworked in a fashion that gave it distinctive markings. The only Crown Tuscan swans we have ever seen were definitely made by Cambridge.

To help clear up our confusion we wrote to the Cambridge Collector's Club and asked their opinion. They agreed with us, and said they have never heard of any Crown Tuscan repros. Either Schroeder has inside information that the Cambridge collectors don't, or the listing should omit the word "repro". We are inclined to believe the latter. Most of these swans are unmarked, so a marked one may be worth the \$100. The lack of a mark does not automatically make the swan a repro, however.

If you are interested in getting a Crown Tuscan Cambridge swan, you may want to take advantage of the Schroeder publication. Dealers know that collectors avoid repros, and may be willing to sell unmarked Cambridge birds at prices below \$20. When the error gets corrected, we expect the price to go up, and you will have a Cambridge swan at a repro price.

There is a possibility that a Crown Tuscan repro really exists, and we haven't heard about it. If you know of one we would be anxious to learn the details. Until we get some solid evidence, we will be examining every unsigned Crown Tuscan swan we come across, trying to find one which is not really Cambridge. We don't think we will be successful.

Ed Berg
401 Nottingham Rd.
Newark, DE 19711

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