

View from the Salt Box - #19

Keith Tucker, an enthusiastic collector from Yorkville, IL recently sent us information about some metal salts in our collection that are marked Nekrassoff. From the name we guessed they might be Russian, but we didn't know anything for sure. Keith sent copies of a 1987 article from the Kovel's newsletter and a 1949 article from Science Illustrated which explain their origin.

Serge Nekrassoff was born in Russia, and served as a Captain in the Imperial Guard. After the Russian Revolution he moved to Paris where he spent 3 years learning metalworking. He did more than learn - he figured out new ways of forming metal by hand to make unusual fancy shapes.

From Paris he moved to Argentina, where he opened a metalworking shop. In 1925 he moved to the United States, starting his shop first in New York and later moving to Darien, CT. The operation employed up to 18 workmen, who were supervised by Serge and his son. They hand made original designs from pewter, copper and enameled copper which were sold through gift shops and department stores. In 1952 the shop was moved to Florida, where it continued operations until 1979. Serge died in 1985 at the age of 92.

We have seen 2 sizes of Nekrassoff salts in enameled copper and one in pewter, in shapes which are shown below. All have the same pewter curlicue handle, which seems to be a Nekrassoff trademark.. The first one is hammered pewter and is marked "S. Nekrassoff" in block letters. According to the articles it probably was made before World War II. The other two are enameled copper with a pewter curlicue handle. The larger of these has a solid blue enamel interior; we have seen the smaller version with mottled white and also with mottled red inside. All the copper ones are marked "Nekrassoff" in italics. The Smith books show copper ones - plates 149-3-1 and 209-3-3 - but there



1 and 209-3-3 - but there

Hand-crafted metalwork has not yet become a collecting category that rates recognition in Antique Price Guides, so the value of these salts is not high. They are still very nice work, and are worth having in your collection if you are lucky enough to find them.