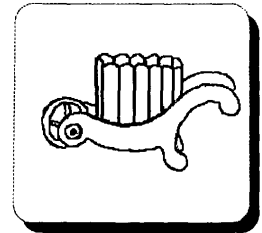




Salty Comments

No.49

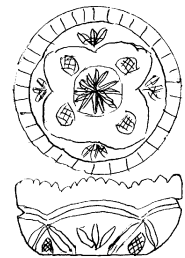
Facts and Opinion about Open Salt Collecting



When you make a glass salt freehand, you can choose any shape you want. The number of possible designs is almost limitless. The same is true for cut glass - the patterns can be changed easily from one salt to the next, at the whim of the glass cutter. When it comes to pressed glass, however, each new shape requires a new mold, which costs thousands of dollars to make. As a result there aren't nearly so many salts to find if you want to collect one of each kind. This is what has made us limit the number of freehand and cut glass salts that we buy, and has focused our interest more on pressed ones.

In hunting for pressed glass salts, we have come to recognize many shapes and patterns, and have found that some are truly rare. Being expensive does not mean a salt is rare - the old barouche (Smith 45-3-3, H&J 858) and the dog with cart (Smith 44-4-3, H&J 2102) are examples of ones that are expensive but frequently seen. We found it interesting to develop a list of what we think are really rare salts, and would like to pass it on. These are dishes that you don't see for sale at even the best antique shows. Once in a lifetime you might find one at a flea market where the seller doesn't realize what he has, but with most of them you will be lucky to find one for your collection at any price. A few are pictured in Smith or Heacock & Johnson - we have included these references when we know of them.

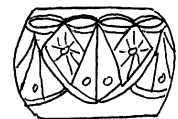
The Heisey PINEAPPLE AND FAN pattern is not very common in clear, but very few of these individual salts were made in emerald green. The Heisey Museum knows of only a dozen or so in existence. We bought one through an ad in the Heisey News about 10 years ago for \$225, and weren't bothered by the fact that one of the rim teeth was chipped. The only other sale we know of was for \$300 to a Heisey collector. (Smith 165-4-3)



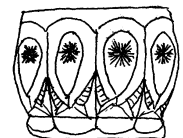
The Heisey REVERE pattern has open salts in clear, pink and green. One batch was made in cobalt, probably for a special order. One of these was sold at a Heisey Convention auction for \$110, and another sold the following year for \$150. These prices brought the cobalt color to every Heisey collector's attention, and a few have been sold by antique dealers since then. They are not as scarce as the emerald PINEAPPLE AND FAN salts, but you will seldom see one on the market.



The Heacock & Johnson book shows an individual salt in the WESTON pattern. The salt must exist, but we have been looking for years and haven't seen one for sale at any price. We're still looking, if you ever find 2 of them. (H&J 3049)



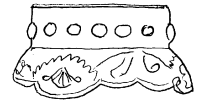
The Fostoria LOUISE pattern is shown in the old Fostoria catalogs, and all of the dishes in this pattern are scarce. The catalog shows only shakers with the set. We found an open salt in this pattern at an Antiques Extravaganza in Florida, and have never seen another either before or since. Fostoria glass collectors would love to have it, we're sure.



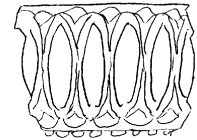
Another early Fostoria pattern that takes years to find is TUXEDO. We finally got one with a collection, and we have seen only two others for sale since. This may not be quite as rare as others on this list, but it certainly ranks as one that few people have. (Smith 119-2-3, H&J 2953)



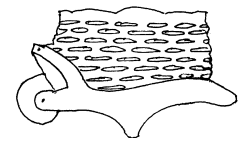
The EMPRESS pattern has open salts in both individual and master sizes. The clear ones are hard to find, but they also exist in emerald green. We know of one collector who has a both sizes in green, and she has a standing order from us if she ever decides to sell them. (Smith 448-4-2, H&J 4675)



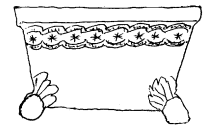
We found the THOUSAND EYE BAND pattern listed in an old Royal Glass Works catalog (Salty Comments #40). It was once attributed to Indiana Tumbler and Goblet (Greentown) because a few dishes are known in chocolate glass. The clear versions of the master and individual open salts can be found, but if you ever see either size in chocolate glass you should buy it. (H&J #2071 and # 4646)



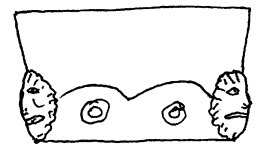
Another dish in chocolate glass is the Greentown wheelbarrow. This is pictured in the books on Greentown Glass, but we have never seen one for sale. Joe St. Clair made a copy with his name in the bottom of the bowl, but his chocolate glass came out a lighter color. He called it "caramel slag", which is more descriptive of what his color really looks like.



The BANDED STAR pattern has a cute little individual salt which looks like an old-fashioned bathtub on 4 legs. It is not a common one, but even less common is the master size. We know the master exists because a nearby collector has two - one mint and the other with broken legs. We have been trying to get a mint one for years now, with no luck. We've never seen one for sale at any price.



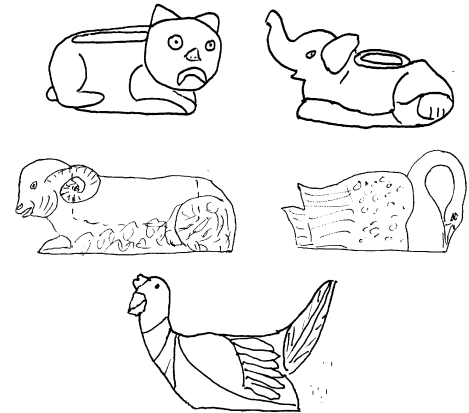
One of our luckiest days occurred last summer, when we went on an antiques hunt in New Hampshire. We found very few open salts, but in the side room of an antique mall we found a frosted white glass dish with faded gold decoration. It was the Fostoria ATLANTA pattern, master size, the square dish with the lion heads on the corners which is scarce even in clear. The prior owner didn't appreciate it, fortunately, so we bought it for 1/10th of what we would have been willing to pay. We've never seen another, and could only find a passing reference to "a few odd pieces made in camphor glass" in one of the pattern glass books.



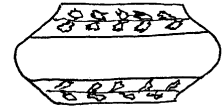
Once on a trip home from visiting our son and his family in New Orleans we found a toboggan salt. This is shown on an old O'Hara Glass Co. catalog, and was made complete with an accompanying celery tray and olive dish. It is pressed glass, with the front bent over after it was taken from the mold to make the toboggan shape. When Patti Johnson visited us in 1988, she told us that if we ever saw another she would like to have one. We never have. (Smith 397-4-2, H&J page 16)



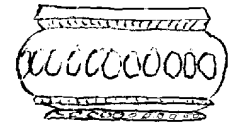
There is a set of animal salts that probably dates to the late 1800's. The books show pictures of a ram, elephant and bulldog (?), and we have found a turkey and swan that seem to be part of the series. These are scarce and much sought after. We don't know of anyone who has a full set. We have found only 3 of the 5 so far. (Bulldog is Smith 90-5-3, Elephant is Smith 458-2-2, Ram is Smith 296-3-2, H&J 994, Swan is Smith 44-6-1, Turkey is Smith 266-3-2)



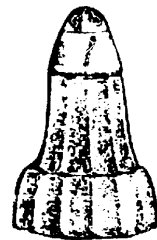
All of the scarce pressed glass salts are not old. Joe St. Clair made a round salt with a band of holly around the rim and his initials in the bottom of the bowl. We know of one in the hands of a salt collector, though more may be in St. Clair collections. Bob Wetzel bought the mold from St. Clair, and made some with his initials on them. Both versions are rarities today. If you find one, buy it. You may never see another one for sale. (Smith 207-5-3, H&J 910)



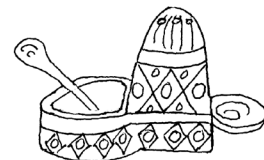
To get a complete collection of Heisey open salts you will need to find the PUNTY BANDS pattern in both individual and master sizes. The smaller one is available occasionally, but not the larger one. About 10 years ago Louise Ream, then Director of the Heisey Museum, said she had seen a master size once, but she didn't have one in her personal collection. We have never seen one anywhere.



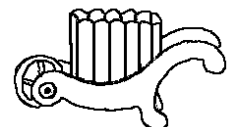
Heisey has another rare salt we would like to find. We saw one on loan to the Heisey Museum once, but have never seen another. It is their MEDIUM FLAT PANEL pattern. The salt is rather plain, but there is a pepper shaker which fits on the top of the open dish and serves as a cover. Undoubtedly the shaker and the salt got separated in many households, so that few matched pairs can be found today.



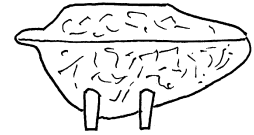
In the early 1940's Imperial made their CAPE COD pattern glass set. This had over 300 different shapes, including the fairly common open salt and a "3-piece salt dip and pepper with glass salt spoon". This latter had a compartment for the pepper shaker behind the open salt, and a tab handle on the back. We have yet to see one of them in real life.



The Adams wheelbarrow which we use in our masthead is another one seldom seen. It has a pewter wheel which was inserted by bending the front supports while the glass was still hot. Heacock & Johnson shows one in milk glass, and we have one in clear. (Smith 356-4-1, H&J 4679)



There is a funny-looking heavy salt on 4 short legs that is rare. It took us a while to figure it out, but we decided it is meant to be a strawberry. We guess that people must have thought it unattractive and not bought very many at the time it was made, because there are so few to be found.

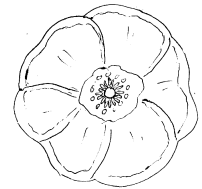


Red intaglio salts are scarce, but the real rarity is a black one. We have seen one in someone else's collection. The color doesn't make much sense for an intaglio, because you can't see the design when you look in the top, but it exists. We're not sure if we will ever see another one like it.

The Gillinder Company made a salt-size dish which we showed in Salty Comments #43. It is a basket-like dish on tripod legs, with a TREE OF LIFE pattern on the outside. Although the Company didn't call it a salt, we're sure that someone must have used it as such because it fits so well in our collection. We wouldn't know where to find another.



In the mid 1940's, Imperial hired an artist, Virginia Evans, to design glass objects in the "Chinese Style", which was becoming popular. Her work produced their Cathay Crystal line comprising about 25 different objects from bookends to candle holders. One of these was a peach blossom shape in frosted crystal that was "a perfect little individual salt, nut, mint or tiny ash tray", to quote the catalog. There are few available, and the Imperial collectors are also looking for them. (Smith 55-2-2)



The Boston & Sandwich Glass Co. made an individual salt in the MORNING GLORY pattern. It doesn't look special, but it is scarce and expensive. Because the Sandwich collectors are looking for them too, its value has risen to \$150 if you can find one. (Smith 117-4-1, H&J 3385)



As we assemble this list, we realize there are many rare pressed glass salts we have omitted. A glance through the book on lacy salts could add at least a dozen, and some of the old glass company catalogs show salts that may even be extinct. The ones we have listed will give you something to be alert for, however. If you find one of them and really want it, grab it and ask the price later. If you have been very lucky, you may already have several of these shapes in your collection. We hope you do.

Ed Berg
401 Nottingham Rd., Newark, DE 19711

January 1995

References: "5000 Open Salts", by William Heacock & Patricia Johnson
A series of 10 books, "Open Salts Illustrated", by Alan B. and Helen B. Smith