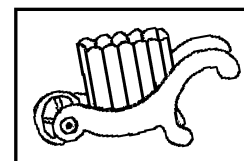


# Salty Comments

*Facts and Opinion about Open Salt Collecting*



Number 87

June 2004

## More Figural Salts

In early 1997, we covered a number of figural salts in Salty Comments 57, but there are many we did not mention. We are reminded of this by a new book, “Victorian Glass Novelties”, which has recently been published. Jo and Bob Sanford cover many glass shapes and we are impressed by the number of salts that are among them. Their information also helps us identify makers in some instances, and affirms that some shapes were really sold to hold sodium chloride.

Since their subject is “Victorian”, they focus on 1867-1901, when Queen Victoria reigned. Most of the figural salts we know of were made in this period, especially in the latter years. Ruth Webb Lee believed that the 1876 Centennial in Philadelphia started the interest in novelty glass shapes. This was also the time when colored glass came into vogue, mostly amber, blue and canary (vaseline).

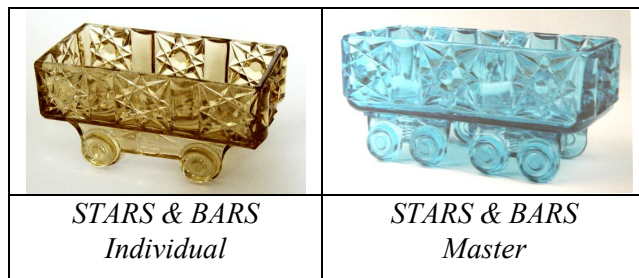
The first point that we noticed is that some shapes like the Mosaic Glass Co. swan boat were listed for multiple uses. This particular one was considered by the maker to be desirable as a “salt, toothpick or cologne bottle holder”. We evidently need to do more research on cologne bottles – we don’t understand why they need a holder. Must be they were much smaller 100 years ago. This also emphasizes the point that the makers are interested in selling their glass, so they call it whatever they think will make people buy it. It makes us feel less guilty about some of the salts in our collection.



*Mosaic Glass Swan Boat*

If we could talk to the maker we’re sure he would agree they ought to be salts too.

A novelty shape often comes in multiple sizes for different uses. The STARS AND BARS railroad car has an individual size with 4 wheels and a master size with 8 wheels. There is also a matching celery tray in the same shape but much longer (8 wheels). The pattern comes in clear as well as amber and blue.



Some things are not called salts at all, though they are in the salt books. The glass high-heeled shoes are an example. Most collections have one or more (yes, including ours) but we would hesitate to put them on the dining table. Many people believe that spilling salt is bad luck, and you should throw a pinch of it



over your left shoulder if a spill occurs. High-heeled shoes are much too unstable to avoid being knocked over. Using them during our Thanksgiving dinners with grandchildren around would leave our rug covered with pinched white stuff. The Pilgrim Shoes are much more practical for salt.

(2)

While we're talking about shoes, one is shown in the back of the H&J book that is the right size for salt but which we've never seen in an old catalog. We got our copy from our sister-in-law, Evelyn, who has been forced to down-size her collection. We have no idea who made it – perhaps it is English.

The novelties book shows an old catalog page from the Canton Glass Co. with a toboggan salt we have never seen. We have the one with fan sides made by O'Hara, but this one has panels on its sides and comes with a matching covered butter dish. If you ever see two of these salts for sale, please buy one for us.

We did not show the smooth-sided wheelbarrow in Salty Comments 57. It was copied by A.A. Imports years ago, but the original can be distinguished by a little star in a dotted diamond on the front between the horns.. We understand that collectors now believe this smooth-sided one is probably Greentown, the same as the basket-weave version. This will increase the value of the older salts, since there will be more people looking for them. It may increase the prices on the A.A. Imports one as well, since some dealers won't know the difference.

We didn't list the Co-Operative Flint Glass cradle before either. It rightfully belongs in the Victorian Novelties category, and is shown in the book in milk glass. The only problem is that the authors didn't realize there was an A.A. Imports copy, and put a picture of it alongside without pointing out the difference. Please remember that there are two versions, and that the original one has different heights at the two cradle ends. A similar problem exists for the frog salt. Their picture shows an L.G. Wright reproduction. The old frog has the rim of the bowl level with the top of the frog's head.

We think we can identify a maker that the book does not give. They show the two old versions of the turtle salt – Belleair Goblet's and Hobbs Brockunier's. They also show a third turtle in milk glass which looks more modern. We have seen this in a 1938 Portieux Glass catalog, and though it certainly is a novelty salt, we're not sure it is Victorian. The picture shows the turtle on his/her back, since the bowl for the salt is underneath.



*Old Shoe*



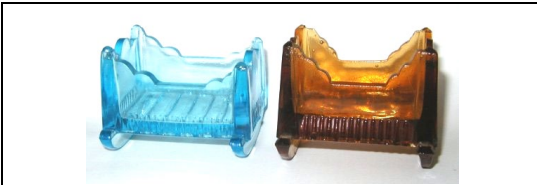
*Canton Toboggan*



*O'Hara Toboggan*



*A.A. Wheelbarrow & Greentown Original*



*Old Cradle & A.A. Imports Copy*



*Old Frog & L.G. Wright Frog*



*Belleair Turtle*



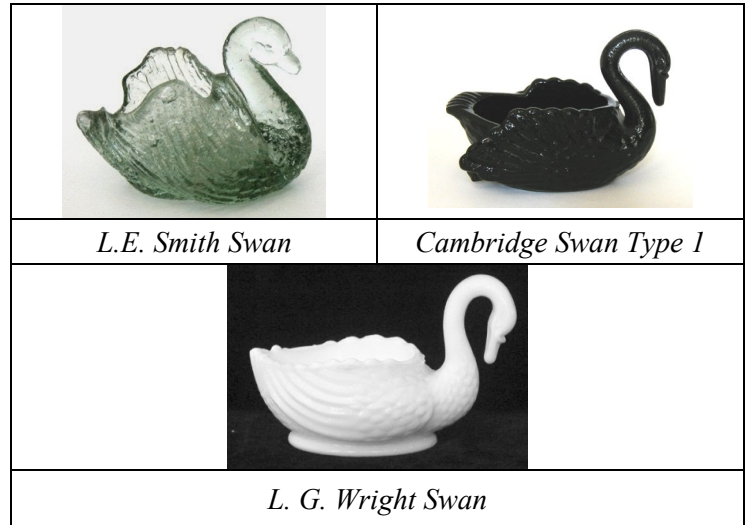
*Hobbs Brockunier Turtle*



*Portieux Turtle*

(3)

Their section on swans raises several questions. One they show is the L.E. Smith swan . It is possible that Smith re-used an old mold, but if it is their original it doesn't fit in the Victorian era. The same goes for the Cambridge Type I swan and the L.G. Wright swans they picture. The first two of these firms went into business after the early 1900's, and Wright started his business in the 1930's.. The book doesn't recognize the maker of any of them, but they definitely are post-Victorian.



There are several salts shown that we didn't have on our previous figurals list. The Flying Fish salt by Challinor Taylor is in this category, as is the old Bird On Branch. The goose stretching upwards, perhaps belongs with the little birds and animals set, shown in SC 57. It pictures four of the Aetna Glass Co. salt-pepper-napkin caster sets that are so scarce and desirable, but three of them lack the pepper shaker. The Bryce boat salt with the band of blocks on the sides is pictured in blue. It comes in a variety of colors – our is amethyst. There is another salt not in the book or in SC87. We don't know where the sugaring bucket on a sled was made, but it definitely belongs in any list of Victorian Figurals. We've seen it in amber and blue, as well as clear.



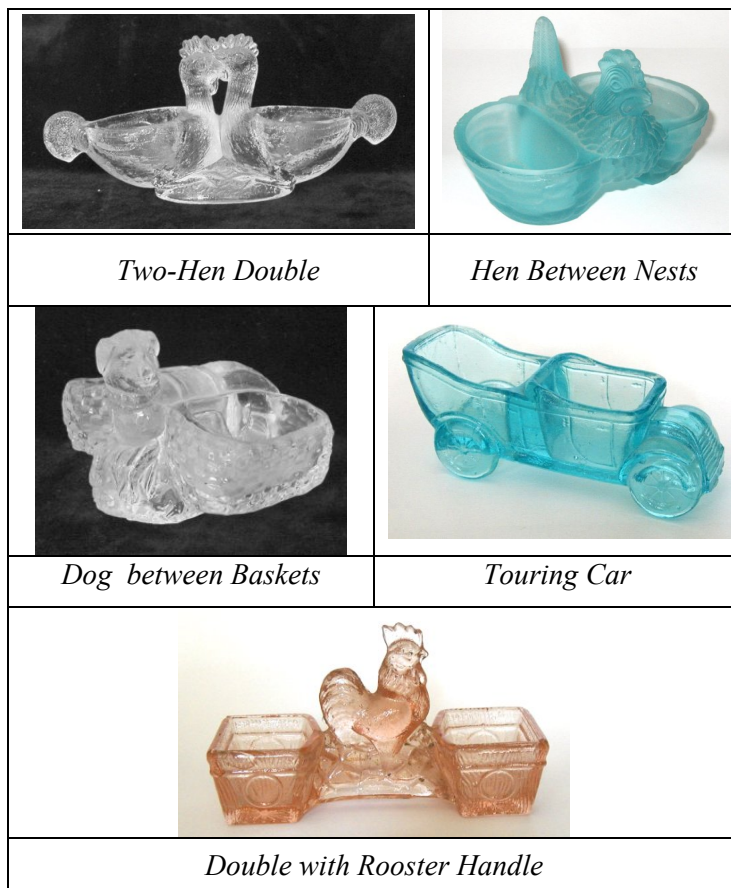
In discussing manufacturers, they mention that the Enterprise Manufacturing Co. Of Akron, OH made a glass match safe, and also “*Little Keg and Baby Jumbo which are very desirable for table use for salt, mustard, toothpick cups, etc.*”. The reference is quite intriguing but no pictures are shown. If you ever find out what these two dishes look like, we'd very much like to hear. The multiple uses they quote are another indication that the makers wanted you to be creative with them in your home.



(4)

The book includes figural doubles in their Victorian Novelties list. They show the Two Hens double by Vallerysthal and the Hen Between Nests double (maker unknown), and the dog between two baskets. To their list we would add the touring car doubles which come in color as well as clear. We have a blue one marked OULLINS as well as an unmarked clear one. We have seen this latter with a Vallerysthal mark. One question, however – when was this type of car developed? Did Queen Victoria live to see one? Maybe it's not strictly Victorian glass if you want to be picky.

We have a double with a rooster handle, also unmarked. We believe most of these figural doubles to be French – the double salts seem to have been much more popular in Europe than they were in the United States.



The book includes price ranges for all items pictured, so we decided to do some comparisons. With Novelties Collectors competing with Open Salt Collectors for a given dish, the value is likely to go up. Although there were a few instances where the amounts differed widely, in general the price ranges agreed with the Open Salts Compendium, which is the most recent price list published. Needless to say, none of the old figural salts were cheap, and the colored ones were worth more than the clear. There were wide differences in the several cases where new ones were thought to be old, but this is to be expected.

We hope you have many of these Victorian Novelty salts in your collection already. They are fun to find and make great displays for salt club meetings. You can try to find all the colors of each one, which will make your cabinets beautiful and will give you a lifelong occupation looking for more.

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References: Salty Comments #57, February, 1997  
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“Open Salts Compendium”, by Sandra Jzyk and Nina Robertson  
“5000 Open Salts”, by William Heacock and Patricia Johnson  
“Victorian Glass”, by Ruth Webb Lee