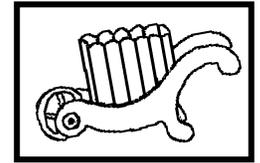


Salty Comments



Facts and Opinion about Open Salt Collecting

Number 81

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Zoo Time

Looking at our salts the other day, we decided we could put together quite a respectable zoo using them. Of course there are a few animals missing, like tigers, monkeys, and zebras, but this zoo is a modest one and there is no admission charge. There is also no expense for feeding and tending the animals in it, which is a big plus.

The first and most obvious choice for our zoo is an elephant. Of course some of the real ones are domesticated, but ours are obviously wild. We found at least 5 different ones, and have chosen three of them for this project. The first is part of the set of small glass animals – an amber one resting with upraised trunk. This one is scarce, and we’re very happy to have found him. We’ve never learned who made this set, and we’re still hunting for the bulldog from it. As the adage goes, you can never have too much money, be too thin, or have too many open salts in your collection. The second elephant is carved from soapstone – one of the many shapes made from this material. We think there is a soapstone monkey, but we don’t have it. The third one we show is an intaglio – the kind of dish made in the 1920’s and sold as a salt, an ash tray, or whatever end use you might be looking for. This is the most realistic picture of an elephant of the three..

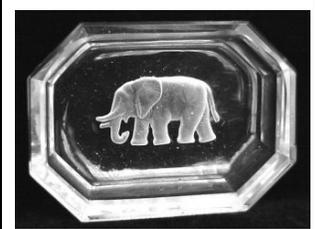
Moving to the caged area, we first find the lions. There are two we know of – the one with the lion’s head made by Summit Art Glass during the last 30 years, and the FROSTED LION pattern which is expensive because pattern glass collectors are looking for it too. It shows a reclining lion on the frosted base, which we hope will show clearly when Kinko’s makes copies of this issue. Ours we got at a bargain price because the bowl has a pronounced list to port (leans to the left, if you are not a sailor).



Amber Glass Elephant



Soapstone Elephant



Intaglio Elephant



Summit Lion Salt



*FROSTED LION
Pattern*

(2)

Our next cage shows a bear – one of many hand-carved from wood. Jane Koble collects this type – if you want to see a large variety of this species, ask to look at her collection. Beyond the bear cage is an elk captured on an intaglio salt. There is some debate whether it should be called a wapiti, but the local zoologist has not ruled on this yet. Also in the ungulate (having hoofs, per Webster) section is the reclining ram that matches the elephant. He is obviously a wild species – no domesticated rams have horns like this. We believe the llama standing beside the coin belongs in this section too. We’ve never examined a llama’s foot, but he looks like he should have hoofs. The Peruvian coin he is standing beside is a puzzle. The embossing on it matches a genuine one sol piece minted in 1867, but the curvature is great. This means that the design would be quite distorted if a real coin were used to make it. We believe the bent “coin” was fabricated that way, and never came from the Peruvian mint.

In the Australian section there is a kangaroo beside a plated bowl. We have no idea how old he is, or even that this particular salt came from “down under”. Another one that needs some research. We also need a koala or a wombat to keep him company.

Moving on to two more common mammals, there is the silver-plated fox that was sold as a salt by Oneida in the 1970’s. This has a plastic liner and a rather crude spoon that sticks out to form a tail if you want. It is part of a set of animals and birds that came with a “Japan” sticker on each piece. Finally in our wild mammals section, we show a squirrel. Zoos we have visited always have several running around loose to gather any food that patrons may drop accidentally or deliberately. Our zoo needs one to be complete.

. Like most animal parks these days, there is a domesticated section where petting of some species is allowed. First are the rabbits – a glass one with a silver-plated head. He almost fits with our ram and elephant, but a wild one never would have a metal head. There is also a salt ware rabbit standing beside a basket. We’ve not found the story on salt ware – it obviously is material that can be formed in a mold. We’ve seen some that were partially dissolved when somebody tried to wash them. Why it was used and who made it are open questions with us. If you have any leads, we’d like to hear them.

	
<i>Carved Wooden Bear</i>	<i>Elk Intaglio</i>
	
<i>Reclining Ram</i>	<i>Llama & “Coin”</i>
	
<i>Kangaroo</i>	
	
<i>Oneida Fox</i>	<i>Squirrel</i>
	
<i>Rabbit, Metal Head</i>	
	<i>Salt Ware Rabbit</i>

(3)

Further in the domestic section, we show the “Pigs at a Trough”, one of the classic pigs pieces made in Germany. Our brother collected these for a while, and has a pig in a locomotive and even a pig entering an outhouse. Neither of these could be used for salt, though. Along with the pig salt, we’re including the costume that was the overwhelming “People’s Choice” at the last National Convention. The “pig” ladies are Lucille and Carolyn Bugel, and we hope they don’t sue us for publishing their wonderful outfit. We show one other pig – a salt ware shape with black eyes and nostrils. No marks to give a hint of its origin , of course.

There are two goats in our petting zoo. One is a marked faience double made by Keller and Guerin, from Saint Clement, France. The second is an intaglio, which shows the goatherd as well as the animal. No marks on this latter one, unfortunately, but it is nice glass and the goat looks very friendly. We have a camel – obviously domesticated because he is carrying two salt baskets. Might be one of the camels that have been hauling salt from the Timbuktu mines in Mali for at least 500 years. We have a burro (donkey, mule?) about to sample the salt in the dish in front of him His load includes a mustard pot and pepper shaker, which are as big as he is - a case for the SPCA, we guess. Finally we have a couple of donkeys pulling a cart. There are several versions of this donkey salt, all made of pottery and marked “Italy”.

Our zoo has a section with aquatic life in it. We’ve chased away the ducks and swans – if we let them in our size would more than double. There is a nautilus shell with an English Registry mark which says it is silver, made in 1885. Also at the bottom of our pond there is a lobster(?) holding two mussel shells. We don’t have salt water, so it’s a puzzle how he got there. It could only happen to a fanatical open salt collector. Our pond has frogs, of course – one beside a white flower (must be a water lily), and the freehand glass one made by Bill Petersen. He was a “lampworker” at the Corning Museum and made small items from glass rods to demonstrate to Museum visitors how glass can be formed in a flame. Finally our pond has a silver wading bird (crane?) looking for fish (and frogs!) for his dinner. He is marked “sterling”, but there are no clues as to where he flew in from.

		
<i>Pigs & Trough</i>	<i>Winning Costume at 2001 Convention</i>	
		
<i>Salt Ware Pig</i>	<i>Faience Goat</i>	
		
<i>Goat & Friend</i>	<i>Camel</i>	
		
<i>Burro Condiment</i>	<i>Italian Donkeys</i>	
		
<i>Nautilus</i>	<i>Lobster(?)</i>	
		
<i>Frogs</i>		<i>Wading Bird</i>

(4)

Our zoo has an aviary, of course, though no hens or swans are allowed. There are two Birds of Paradise. One sits on the rim of a china dish, and her tail stretches across to the opposite side, forming a handle. The other sits beside a round dish with a cobalt liner. It has an 800 silver mark and a maker's mark we have not identified. The liner fits nicely in the dish but may have been added long after the salt was made. We're dubious about glass liners in silver salts. Too often they are the creative work of a dealer, who "marries" a stray liner with a metal dish that it happens to fit. Further along in the aviary, there is a freehand glass peacock and a black-painted metal pelican. We're not happy with the size of the pelican's beak, but with the webbed feet and the short legs, what else could it be? Have we a new species? We might name it *Saltdishicus Birderari* and try to get it listed in a bird book somewhere.

Also in the freehand glass arena, there is a white parrot sitting on the rim of a round glass bowl. The bird is made with colored glass, not just painted. Wish we knew more about its origins. There are two china ones – a black toucan on the rim of an oval dish and an owl pepper shaker sitting on an open salt that might be its nest. We're not sure what a real owl's nest would look like – this one isn't shaped like anything a bird would make.

Finally our zoo ends with a couple of crawlers. We have several turtles in our collection, but have chosen the one by Bellaire Goblet Co. for exhibition. In this case he has become a Galapagos Island Tortoise, an exotic designation which fits because the salt is a rare and an endangered species – don't drop it! The other crawler is an Oneida silver-plated snail, first cousin to the fox we showed earlier. He has the same plastic liner and crude spoon as all of the animals in the series.

	
<i>China B of P</i>	<i>Silver B of P</i>
	
<i>Freehand Peacock</i>	<i>Pelican(?)</i>
	
<i>Parrot on Rim</i>	<i>Toucan on Rim</i>
	
<i>Owl Pepper</i>	
	
<i>Tortoise (Bellaire Turtle)</i>	<i>Oneida Snail</i>

We hope you have enjoyed your tour through our zoo. We have left out a number of salts, possibly some of your favorites, so you might make an even better zoo than this. Certainly you can use your animal salts to make an interesting display. Start work on it now, and bring it to the next club meeting or to the National Convention in 2003. It might win a prize, but at the very least it will be of great interest to other open salt collectors.