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The 1930s Collectible Colors Change During the Great Depression

By Tom Cotter

This article continues my exploration into the grand era of color in the U.S. glass industry between 1920 and 1940 (see *Mountain States Collector*, September, 2018, *The Colorful 20s*). What could possibly happen to the U.S. glass industry during the Great Depression? Disaster? Lack of creativity and color? Hardly. While many companies within the industry declined, went out of business, or merged with others, glass firms evolved and even flourished in some instances. Other writers and I distinguish between less expensive, true “Depression Glass” and more costly and normally higher quality “Elegant Glass”.

The term “Depression Glass” is now identified with inexpensive machine-produced, high-volume, “continuous tank” glass. A major innovation came along at the just the right time in 1928, as Jeannette Glass perfected the methodology for making mass production tank-based glass. Aptly, the “Adams to Windsor Depression” patterns begin and end with Jeannette designs. Even as Pattern Glass makers mimicked American Brilliant cut glass during the Victorian Era, Depression ware makers included patterns in their mold to imitate “Elegant Glass” fine etchings. This gave us dozens of lines like Cherry Blossom, Patri-



cian (Spoke), and Sylvan (Parrot). While pinks, greens, ambers, and yellows comprised many offerings, a host of other colors included ruby, shades of blue, ultramarine, teal, amethyst and opaque colors in black, white, (Monax, Cremax, Vitrock, and milk), blue (Delphite), green (Jadeite/Jade), and solid pinks. At times, glass appeared as premiums in boxes of cereal, bags of flour, and everyday purchases such as toothpaste. Movie theaters and gas stations gave out glass as premiums. During the 1930s, Woolworth’s and other “five and dime” stores sold Depression Glass at affordable prices to brighten U.S. homes. Hazel Atlas, Hocking, Lancaster, L.E. Smith, and others brought color and interest to kitchens, dining rooms, and bedrooms throughout the U.S. when the population needed cheering.

Meanwhile, Elegant Glass companies continued to satisfy the tastes of consumers wishing “a bit more” quality and conceding more cost. Using better formulas, pot-based batches, and hand-processing including manual pressing, blowing, etching, and adding handles, feet, and/or stems, corporations such as Cambridge, Fenton, Fostoria, Morgantown, and New Martinsville continued to hold their business base. By contrast, Elegant patterns retailed through

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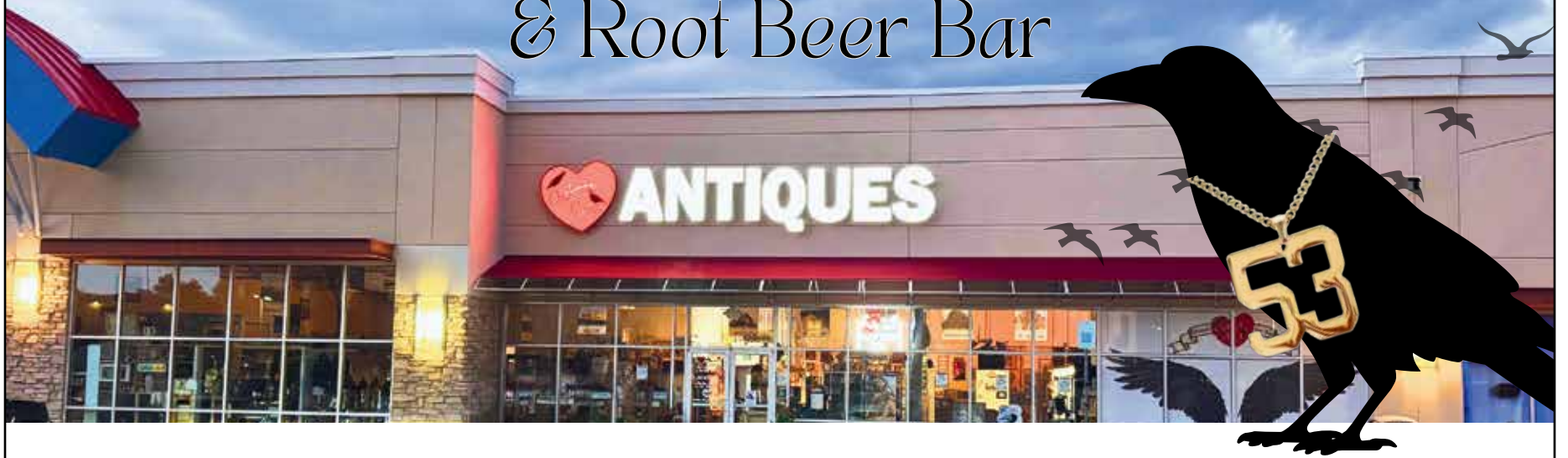
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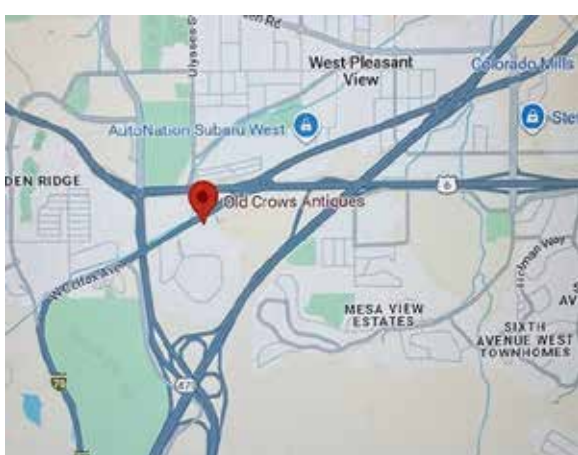


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McGuffey, Schoolmaster of America

By Henry J. Pratt

More than 180 years ago in Cincinnati, Ohio, the publishing firm of Truman and Winthrop B. Smith signed a textbook contract with William Holmes McGuffey, a dour disciplinarian and relatively unknown homespun philosophy professor. The contract obligated McGuffey to prepare six school books—a primer, a speller and four readers.

When the now-famous contract was approved in 1834, the United States was a rapidly-growing country with ever-expanding western frontiers. People were beginning to appreciate the importance of sound public education, especially at the elementary level. Publishers Truman and Smith and Bill McGuffey were no exceptions.

With no vocal minorities or feminists in textbook publishing and no watchdog committees hovering about, McGuffey methodically set about fulfilling his contract terms. McGuffey included in his textbooks what he considered most important for the schoolkids of yesteryear.

Studies show about half of America's school-children in the late 1800s and early 1900s were exposed to the living precepts of McGuffey's Readers. More than 122 million of the McGuffey publications were sold in an 85-year period ending in 1920, and it's estimated that a billion grandparents, great-grandparents and great-great-grand-parents read McGuffey



during that time. Seven million copies were sold between 1836 and 1850 alone—this in a nation then of 23 million people.

McGuffey's texts and basic instruction methods, some teachers say now, worked in earlier America because of his strong belief and trust in the classic exhortation: "train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not de-part from it."

Under his textbook contract, mcGuffey's First and Second readers successfully hit the

print in 1836, followed by a surge of advertising hype by the publishers. the third and Fourth readers came out the next year. brother Alex mcGuffey's the rhetorical Guide was published in 1844 and later became the Fifth and Sixth readers. In 1838 Alex also compiled the Speller. mcGuffey's publications became the basic elementary texts in 37 states, and were particularly popular in the frontier west. However, they were little used in New England, where early education was still slanted to the gifted and privileged few.

Now generally taboo in children's literature and text- books, the mcGuffey series abounded in teaching lessons on morality. many stories were of the Horatio Alger bent, emphasizing to the children, "When there's a will, there's a way."

In mcGuffey's readers respect and obedience to parents and other elders were expected; honesty was the best policy; industry and frugality were glorified. Lying and profanity were soundly condemned.

Such standards of conduct and behavior are often missing in today's literature and textbooks. many of our ancestors memorized poetic mcGuffey lessons from yesteryear such as: "All that you do; Do with might. things done by halves; Are not done right."

McGuffey was born on the western pennsylvania frontier in 1800, the second of a family of 11 children. Did his teaching methods and textbook contents work in the heyday of a sim-

Continued on page 9

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Pricey Wooton Desks Old and New Still Attract Buyers

By Anne Gilbert

To a generation used to sterile cubby hole office spaces for them and their computers, the Wooton desks may seem an oddity. Strangely enough they are finding their way into many home offices. There is room for that lap top and spaces for all kinds of office supplies. They were a popular and useful antique collectible in the late 20th century and expensive. Even todays reproductions are expensive.

In late 19th century America new businesses were opening daily. To meet their needs new types of furniture made strictly for offices were created. The desk became the most important piece piece of furniture . It also became a status symbol for the wealthy.

Of all the office furniture designed during the late 19th century it was the Wooton patent desk, made by William S. Wooton of Indianapolis, Indiana, that was the most unique. It offered a miracle of storage in one compact place. It was expensive but that didn't stop it being purchased by millionaires such as John D. Rockefeller and Joseph Pulitzer. However it came in four price grades: extra,superior,-



superior,ordinary and standard.

Originally it was designed for railway offices and business that required varied storage, writing and filing in a small space.

What made it unique were its swing-out, compartmented and fitted bombe doors. Above and below the fall-fronted writing surface were still more compartmented storage spaces.

The most elegant Wootons were made of mahogany and rosewood with incised carv-

ing. They often combined oak and burl oak with ornate brass hardware. The less expensive versions were of walnut or cherry.

Parts were machine made during the 1870s in the popular Renaissance Revival style. By the 1880s furniture fashions changed and the simple, straight lines of Eastlake defined the fashionable Wooton.

Popularity bred copies that included smaller, simpler versions that were patented. A Chicago company, T.E.Gordon & Son, made vertical cylinder desks. The rounded tops and base opened out, offering pigeonholes, similar to the Wooton version.

There were even miniature Wootons made for children.

CLUES: By the early 20th century roll top desks had replaced the Wooton. And like the Wooton they were mass produced and reproduced. Original 19th century Wootons still turn up at auctions. Prices range from \$25,000 to \$250,000. If you like the concept check auctions and eBay.

PHOTO CAPTION: 19TH CENTURY Wooton "Extra Superior" desk.
PHOTO CREDIT: EBay

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McGuffey, Schoolmaster of America Continued . . .

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pler America? this is best answered by saying that many of our great thinkers, political leaders, and literary and industrial giants studied mcGuffey readers while growing up. these included William Howard taft, Clarence Darrow, thomas edison, mark twain and Henry Ford.

With our changing educational and social mores and more intense textbook publishing competition, the readers became passe in the late 1920s. However, long-time admirers formed mcGuffey Societies to honor the man. mcGuffey was fondly referred to as “the Schoolmaster of America.”

After spending 19 years as an Ohio educator, including four years as president of Ohio University in Athens, mcGuffey went to the University of Virginia faculty. there, he quietly passed the last 28 years of his life, dying in 1873, but his dramatic con-tribution to American education lives on.

The 1930s Collectible Colors Continued . . .



Continued from page 1
department stores such as Macy’s and through jewelry and gift shops, but occasionally through Woolworth’s and others. One major contribution to survival and growth of the Elegant glass firms came when the states repealed Prohibition in December, 1933. While decanters, stemware and steins had been produced and marketed since 1920, the repeal legitimized and encouraged lines of alcohol-related pieces. Continu-

ous changes by these companies included new patterns, shapes, decorations, and, of course, new or renamed colors. White (milk, Moonstone, Ivory, etc.) and black (Ebony) glass offerings came from many of the companies, often as accents. New Martinsville produced Smoke, a grey transparent. Fenton in particular began to reheat glass pieces to create opalescence, as had been done by Northwood, Dugan, and Jefferson glass some years earlier. Additionally, Fenton introduced Blue Ridge in 1939, with a thin lip of cobalt glass around the top of a piece, heralding the extremely successful Crest pieces with a ribbon of contrasting color or crystal around the top edge in subsequent decades.

Among other choices, rich, deep purples, blues, and reds appeared in the 1930s, mostly in transparent pieces. Reversing the order in last year’s article, we look at indigo and violet glass first. Heisey Alexandrite, Fostoria Wisteria, and Cambridge Heatherbloom represented subtle neodymium-based glass changing from

orchid/lavender to soft blue under different light conditions. Morgantown’s Lilac crossed over to a pale opaque. Consolidated and Phoenix produced pastel purples in a number of Art Deco lines. Vibrant purples appeared in medium to dark shades from most of the Elegant Glass companies. These included Fostoria Burgundy in addition to Cambridge and Morgantown Amethyst, all in the Violet area of the spectrum. Blue glass offerings grew, some in paler shades continued from the 1920s like Fostoria Azure, with others introduced later in the decade, including 1938 Cambridge Moonlight and Tahoe Blue. However, dark blue seemed the choice of the 1930s, some bordering on the Indigo segment of the spectrum. Among the blues were Morgantown Ritz Blue, Fenton and Cambridge Royal Blue, and various cobalt creations by Duncan-Miller, New Martinsville, Heisey, Paden City, and others. Innovative Fenton offered opaque blues with streaked
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The Beautiful Brooch –

By Robert Reed

The beautiful brooch traditionally had been one of the most enduring types of jewelry as well as one of the most varied.

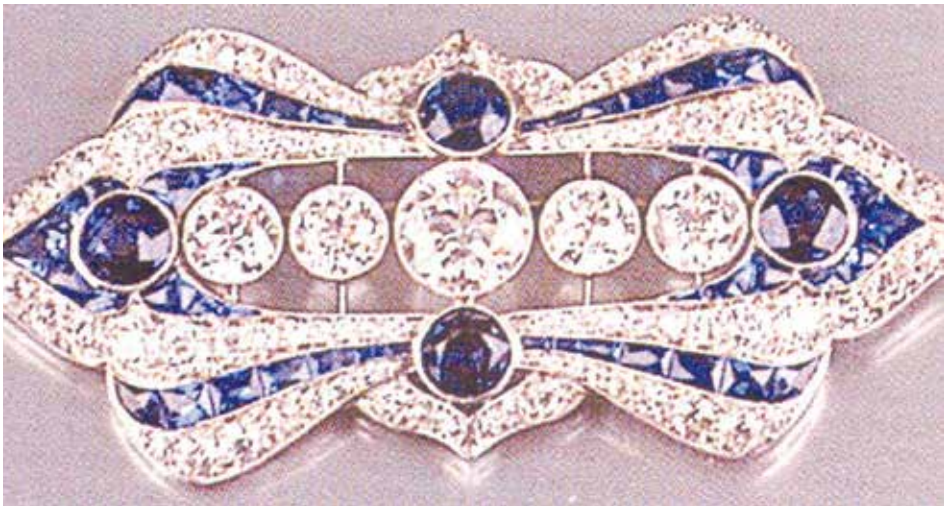
Women have affixed these large and decorative ornamental pins on their clothing for centuries. Some brooches could be fashioned from cardboard or human hair and be fairly plain, or they could be adorned with gold and diamonds and be nearly priceless.

By the early 19th century the brooch had become a true fashion statement of the rich and famous. Initially only the wealthiest woman could afford the assembly of precious stones and fine metals required for a proper brooch. The more lavish and dazzling the better.

Gradually however the trend of a clever brooch began to extend to a wider variety of social classes and tastes.

“The brooch was probably the most popular and widely produced form of jewelry” in the entire 19th century according to Stephen Giles author of Miller’s Jewelry Antiques Checklist. Accordingly, “examples offered a wide range of styles, materials and levels of quality.” Certainly the brooch selection of that historic century was vast.

The turquoise and diamond brooch was



ferred information to readers to “wishing hair made into pins.” The magazine assured a large number of orders had already been recently filled and ladies were delighted with the results. They added, “hair is at one the most delicate and lasting of our materials and survives us like love.”

At the other end of the brooch ‘rainbow’ might be a bejeweled item with a domed center and an assortment of diamonds, opals and corals. Some middle and latter 19th century brooches were

popular early in the 19th century, but other choices could be of solid gold with matching earrings, or a mixture of rubies, sapphires, and emeralds.

Ultimately there was a world of other fashionable materials too including cameo, coral, enamel, mosaic, painted porcelain, and pearls. The image of the brooch would vary widely as well extending from a mere cluster of jewels to the specific shape of a bird, flowerpot, Greek cross, butterfly, Egyptian beetle, or eagle. Then too there were widely differing designs of pin-wheels, starbursts, loops, bows, and scrolled frames.

By the middle of the 19th century the fashion world was awash with diverging brooches in seemingly endless styles.

In 1861 a leading women’s magazine of-

large enough to include equally attractive pendant attachments in the design. In some cases the pendants were removable or could even be converted into smaller brooches themselves.

At one point the prestigious Johnston and Company at Union Square in New York City offered brooch selections such as the circle of swallows, the diamond bow-knot, the Roman wreath, the Dragon and pearl, and the six-diamond loop. All were advertised in the 1890s as “effective and tasteful ornaments,” and further “all of these may be worn as pendants.”

Smart shops in the center of New York City seemed to do a thriving business in the sale of striking brooches near the end of the 19th century. Prices, at the time, ranged from \$15 to \$150 depending mostly on the use of diamonds instead of pearls.

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So Many And So Special

Not that the popularity of the brooch needed a boost, but the age of Art Nouveau did indeed push the jewelry item to new heights. The flowing lines and floral forms of the French inspired 'new art' were perfect for the brooch.

Indeed the Art Nouveau movement, "had a dramatic effect on the styles and materials used for brooches," comments author Giles. "Metalwork designs were flowing and vegetal, with graceful intertwined shapes featuring floral and abstract motifs."

The discreet shopper might find an enameled dragonfly with sapphire body, a diamond-encrusted spider, or a peacock with a body of rubies and pluses of sapphires and garnets. A sprig of flowers could 'bloom' with a mixture of gold, pearl, and emerald. A bird of gold and turquoise could brandish eyes made of diamonds.

Much of the Art Nouveau influence came from the work of French glassmaker and jeweler Rene Lalique. Now the lovely brooch was part of a movement toward nontraditional images of not only the dragonfly and spider but the bat and the serpent as well as clover and wildflowers.

Louis Tiffany's very own Tiffany and Company launched a department of "artistic jewelry" just to keep up with the creative demand.

Accordingly there were a multitude of brooch makers from the mighty to the meager. A brooch decorated with owls and frogs could come from Italy's renowned Ernesto Pierret, or something equally unusual from France's Giacinto Melillo. Eventually the list of those marking eloquent brooches became vast and worldwide from Cartier to Gorham, Marcus and Company, Unger, Vever, and Wiener. Other memorable maker's marks included Edward Oaks, Reed and Barton, Margaret Rogers, Schlumberger, James Muirhead & Sons, and Watherston & Son of London.

The J.H. Johnston Company offered what they called the Roman Gold brooch during the 1890s and charged extra for a diamond center. The Empire Wreath brooch was also a big item. "The wreath," noted one firm's advertisement during that decade, "appealed to seekers after ornamental beauty long before the time of the Emperor. In now using it to ornament our smaller silver articles, we feel that its grace and simplicity gives them a lasting charm."

Art Nouveau in worldly style and in brooch design was closely followed by the era of Art Deco. While the Art Deco vogue was largely attributed to the Paris Exposition of 1925, it had actually been fully developed much earlier in the 20 century. The Art Deco brooch stressed geometric figures and symmetrical forms and often made lavish use of brass, chrome and enamel in dazzling combinations.

The Paris event itself featured over 400 jewelry firms worldwide and a vast assembly of beautiful brooches. The Cartier is said to have dominated the exposition with a display of more than 150 breath-taking items.

"The case of the brooch demonstrates the survival of 19th century historicism in the 1920s," notes author Hans Nadelhoffer in the book, Cartier: Jewelers Extraordinary. "In addition to Persian, Chinese and Egyptian influences, the Cartier brooch during the Art Deco period in the form of fibula (dress clasp), was also to be enriched by 7th century Merovingian forms."

Nadelhoffer pointed out that Cartier's



brooch designs were based in part on the study of designs in museums. Moreover as early as 1907 it was fashionable to secure a kimono or kaftan with a fibula brooch clasp. According to Nadelhoffer such an item had been featured as one of the wedding presents for the Queen of Spain.

The brooch in the Art Deco tradition sometimes included molded glass with gilt and silver overlay set in brass. Amber-colored glass was a popular setting along with the pale-colored mineral cut of marcasite mounted on silver or white metal.

In France both Cartier and Van Cleef & Arpels further developed in the Art Deco period of the 1920s and 1930s a double clip design which could be separated on either side of the neckline, or joined together as a single brooch.

Today both Art Nouveau and Art Deco designs in a striking brooch are very popular with collectors. Typically those brooches signed or identified by leading maker are considerably more valuable than unmarked varieties.

Captions:

1. Gold and enamel brooch, rose-cut diamond pansy against blue background. (Skinner Inc.)
2. Art Deco platinum, sapphire, and diamond brooch. French-cut sapphires (Skinner Inc.)
3. Amethyst and diamond brooch, box marked Jays of London. (Skinner Inc.)
4. Etruscan Revival gold and intaglio brooch, Hallmark of Ernesto Pierret, Italy. (Skinner Inc.)

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Their Mission: To collect, preserve, and share history associated with Louis Dupuy's Hotel De Paris, and serve as a catalyst for heritage tourism in Georgetown, Colorado.

The Mountain States Collector, a tabloid newspaper dedicated to promoting the enjoyment of antiquing and collecting in the Rocky Mountain region, is distributed the first weekend of every month through shops, auctions, flea markets and antique shows, and is mailed to subscribers.

(Opinions of the writers contained herein are not necessarily the opinions of the publishers.)

Advertising information: call or text Jon DeStefano at **720-276-2777** or for any other information, call Peg DeStefano at **303-910-2604** or email us at spreepub@mac.com

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Ship Shape Antiques Shore Up Collections



By Anne Gilbert

Items related to ships and sailor craftsmanship have never lost their appeal to collectors. This is especially true when items have been made by men at sea from whale teeth and bone into what is known as scrimshaw. The same holds true with ships parts and decorative objects made by 18th and 19th century American craftsmen. Among the rarest examples are ships' figureheads carved in many forms such as female busts. When they

come to auction prices can range from \$7,000 up.

While these days some of the best examples are in museums, such as the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, VA., opportunities come up at Americana auctions held by Skinner Galleries, in Marlborough, MA.

Knowing seafaring terms for items is a must. For example, a billethead, is a scroll form, similar to Ionic and Corinthian capitals and were often used in place of a figurehead on the ships' prow. They ranged in size from six feet up. Carved rosettes and acanthus leaves were the usual carved decorations. Often they replaced a damaged figurehead. They were used from 1830 to 1880.

Sailors did their carving with anything from jackknives to sail needles. The lower jaw of a medium-sized whale had approximately 50 teeth from four to ten inches long. After the design was etched, lampblack with a varnish fixative was rubbed over it, then wiped away, leaving the finish picture blacked in. When tinted with color pigments they are even more desirable as miniature works of art.

Practical items were also carved from whale bone such as sewing stands, salt dips and kitchen utensils. On the romantic side, sailors often created valentines from seashells and placed in a wooden frame.

CLUES: Faking of scrimshaw items has

been going on for decades. Beware of signed pieces since scrimshaw was rarely signed. An old whale tooth should have a soft beige, patina. Since tinted scrimshaw is more valuable, many blackened pieces have been recently tinted. Some scrimshaw is being made of tinted plastic. Under ultraviolet light whale ivory glows. Plastic doesn't.

There are many reproductions of ships' figureheads. Authentic ones were made of oak and pine.

Many small examples of old ship parts come to auction and would be an affordable beginning collection.

Research and museum visits are a must.



Photo Captions: (1) Polychrome ships' figurehead. C. 1830-40, sold At Skinner auction in 2014 for \$7,995. (2) Cased shell work sailors valentine. Sold, 2015 for \$2,337 at Skinner auctions.

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August's What Is It?

Our August What Is It fooled a lot of people. So many thought it was a glass caster which was put under a furniture leg to protect the floor. It is actually a salt dish.

Time was when the salt cellar or salt dish honored the table on which it sat, and also honored the person who sat before it.

Centuries ago salt was considered a very valued item. It was costly, but considered a choice seasoning for meals. Typically the salt sat in a single dish at the head of the table. The honor of sitting at the head of the table above the salt was then given to the most distinguished person or persons at the dining table.



Much later Victorians would provide individual salt cellars in the quest for elegant dining. Some the finest examples may be made of silver, but most were fashioned from a variety of glass. Today some salt cellars are prized by collectors and can even be found offered at major auction houses.

September's What Is It?



Send your answers to the What Is It contest, postmarked by September 20, to the Mountain States Collector, P.O. Box 1003, Bailey, CO 80421. At least three winners will be drawn. Winners will receive a one year electronic subscription to the Mountain States Collector. Be sure to include your email address to your guess.

The 1930s Collectible Colors Continued . . .



Continued from page 9

Periwinkle and soft Pekin, while Cambridge countered with icy Windsor Blue. Aquamarine and teal, more commonly made by a couple of "Depression" firms, straddled the green and blue lines, including Stiegel Green by Fenton.

Greens came in many shades and intensities, with most companies including Consolidated offering paler greens. Fenton made opaque malachite-like Mongolian Green and pale Jade (also made by Beaumont). Transparent greens ranged from rich medium offerings by New Martinsville, Paden City, Fostoria (Empire Green), and Cambridge (Forest Green) to Morgantown's deep, shadowy Stiegel Green. Next in the rainbow is yellow, with which I

have included Amber for simplification. Many firms continued these colors from the 1920s. Consolidated/Phoenix offered pastel yellow and Honey (amber); Cambridge Gold Krystol (yellow), amber, and 1938 Mocha; Heisey Sahara (yellow) and amber; Fostoria and West Virginia Specialty Glass Topaz (yellow); Central, Fenton, New Martinsville, and others mainly amber.

From those colors we move to orange, pink, and red. Orange remained rare, the most notable being very pricey Heisey Tangerine, while Cambridge experimented with but did not put orange into regular production. Pink colors flourished: Cambridge Peach-blo, Dianthus, and 1938 LaRosa; Fenton and Fostoria Rose;

while New Martinsville, Paden City, and others made various pink pieces. A pink variation came in the 1930s when Cambridge (and Henry Hellmers) introduced flesh-toned opaques Crown Tuscan and Coral. Hellmers also developed a similar Aladdin Alacite mixture later in the decade, but with uranium salts included. About 1939, Fenton began making a Cranberry color, which would become a major company boost throughout its extended future. Among transparent "red-reds" were ruby shades by Duncan-Miller, Fenton, Fostoria, New Martinsville, Paden City, and West Virginia Specialty Glass. Cambridge attached the label Carmen to their "full-bodied" red. Morgantown used Spanish Red. Variation among these reds was substantial, from deep crimson to sullen blood red. Fenton reissued opaque Mandarin Red in a number of stunning decorative pieces.

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Krysti Jomei of Birdy magazine couldn't resist visiting the dinosaurs at the Brass Armadillo. Photo by Sean Forrester.

