

# Czechoslovakian Collectors Association



Spring Newsletter  
May 2016

## Czechoslovakian Pottery how popular was it? by David Fein

When you research a specific type of pottery (other than the general sales figures, production numbers, and duration of production) what can you look at to determine its popularity throughout the world?

One thing that can always be attributed to any type of popular item is how often it was copied by competitors in the same country, competitors from the same continent, and competitors world-wide.

Czech pottery from the 1920s and '30s was some of the most copied of the ceramics of the period.

Czechoslovakian pottery was not only copied for its colorful design; it was copied for different shapes and molds.



Ditmar Urbach (DU) was the most popular of the Czech pottery companies worldwide. Ditmar Urbach canister sets from the '20s and '30s can be found with writing in English, German, Dutch, French, Spanish, Czech, and Hebrew.



Today, the most popular DU items are the animal pitchers. These were copied in Japan; mainly the Raven (often called the Toucan), and the Dog pitcher. The Japanese made a small Raven creamer, smaller than the normal DU creamer size using totally different pottery a rough bottom rather than glazed, with inferior paint that chipped easily.



The Japanese version is the smaller jug

The Dog pitcher copy was the exact size as the DU one but again the pottery and paint was inferior. The Japanese Dog's paint chipped easily and the pottery was prone to extreme glaze crazing; often looking like the Chinese pottery from hundreds of years ago.



The English company Myott also copied

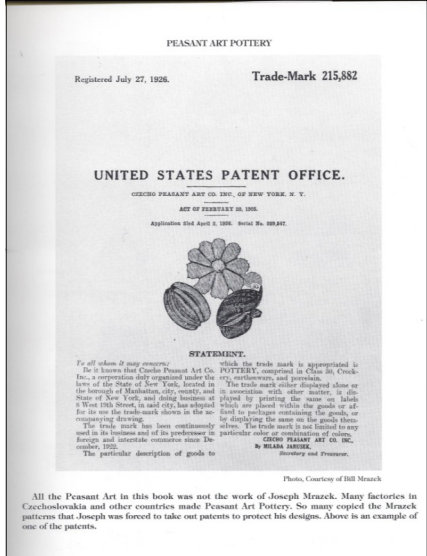
the extremely rare Ditmar Urbach Cat handled full pitcher and running mouse. The English version (like the Japanese) had inferior paint that chipped easily and pottery that was prone to glaze crazing. Even so, the Myott English copy is still highly prized and fetches a price of \$800+ more depending on the condition.



Ditmar Urbach original



Myott copies



Ditmar Urbach's other items were also copied. The Ditmar Urbach patterns. These were copied often exactly as pictured, or with slight variations. These were copied mainly by the English Ceramics companies.

## Rosemary (Rosie) Loss Bodien

10 March 1943 - 25 December 2015



Rosie, a second generation Czech-American, was born and raised in Minnesota. She graduated from River Falls College in Wisconsin with a Bachelor's Degree (Elementary Education) in May and married Danforth (Dan) Bodien in June of 1966. They moved to Oregon where Rosie taught fifth grade for four years. With the birth of their children, Rosie turned her full attention to raising a family and in 1971 they moved to Seattle and then to Kirkland in 1977 where she lived the remainder of her life. When her children were all in school, Rosie was a substitute elementary teacher as well as being

active in PTA, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and neighborhood planning groups. Rosie was a great lover of the outdoors - she enjoyed hiking, skiing, biking, camping and loved to work in her garden. She was a long time member of the Seattle Mountaineers and was a leader of mid-week hikes. Rosie and Dan were also great lovers of genealogy, travel and contradancing and made several cross country trips doing genealogy research, visiting friends and relatives and contradancing. In addition, they made many trips abroad including several to the Czech Republic where Rosie searched for and visited with her relatives. In 1995, she founded and chaired the Czech/Slovak Interest Group for the Eastside Genealogical Society. Rosie was an avid collector of Czechoslovakian pottery and perfume bottles, most of which have been donated to museums for permanent display. Rosie was a true ambassador of Czech and Slovak culture in America.

Survived by her husband, Dan; sons Andrew Bodien of Portland, OR and Scott (Elizabeth (Betsy)) Bodien of Charlotte, NC, daughter Tanya (Miguel Codes Piñero) Bodien of Dubai, UAE; grandsons Óscar Codes-Bodien, Daniel Codes-Bodien and Jonathan Danforth Bodien; sisters Emilie (Ron Sharpless of Alturas, CA and Louise Cameron of Roseville, MN).

Donations in lieu of flowers or gifts to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center [www.fredhutch.org](http://www.fredhutch.org) or the National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library [www.ncsml.org](http://www.ncsml.org).

## *A Celebration of Life*



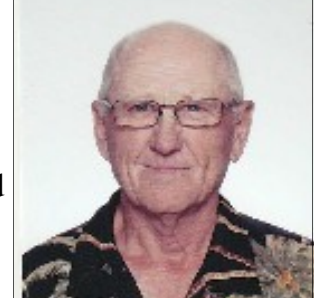
*Rosemary (Rosie) Loss Bodien  
1943-2015*

We also lost another member, Frank Husak of Riverside, CA. Frank and I had many email correspondences regarding Czech pottery, mostly Mrazek in which we discussed pieces on which we had questions. I never met Frank and he didn't come to Convention that I know of, but he was an avid collector of many times of Czech items. His family has donated some to the Czech museum in CR, of which I hope to see some of this year. Rosie's collection is also being organized better for this year. We are lucky that people are willing to share their collections for all to see. Dave

President's Report Spring 2016  
From Dwight Gilbert

Hello members!! Spring newsletter time already!! The convention is fast upon us. June 2-4 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa!! I encourage all who can attend to please do so, a good time will be had by all.

First we will explore THE Dave Phelps collection of Msarek pottery and Czech birds! Dave's collection is world class so one does not want to miss this opportunity. We leave Thursday morning so plan to be early to the convention.



Also this year will feature a tour of Rosie Bodien's collection of perfume bottles and accessories at the Czech Museum which is another collection not to be missed. The tour will be narrated by CCA's own Verna Kocken.

Along with the CCA, Cedar Rapids has many other attractions to be enjoyed. It was the home of Grant Wood, the painter of the famous American Gothic piece along with many other unique paintings. His studio, 5 Turner Avenue, is available for viewing. The kolaches at the bakery in Old Town are heavenly!!

I would encourage attendees to please bring photos of their collections or at least the favorite part of their collections to share with the gang. We can put the photos on display for all to see. Lastly, it would be great to be able to put faces with the names on our members list so rally around and let us see all of you at Cedar Rapids in June. Be there or be square!!

God Bless.

# BEADMaking IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

BY

GERALD VATH

On my recent trip to Germany, Austria and England over the Christmas and New Year holidays, I kept my fingers crossed that I would find some Czech Gablonz glass bead Christmas ornaments to add to my collection. Being on a tour and no ability to easily get outside city centers, I knew my chances were slim. But less than a week into the trip, upon arriving in Salzburg and at the start of our walking tour, I spied a shop window glistening with the unmistakable shimmer of the ornaments I prize! Many on display were identical or similar to ones I owned but not the motorcycle with the small seed beads wrapped around a glass “bangle” to form the wheels. Although I suspect this particular ornament is not very old, it is modeled after a tradition in glass bead ornament-making that goes back over 150 years.



## THE MAKING OF SOLID BEADS

Glass bead-making is both an offshoot and a logical extension of the larger glass-blowing industry in the former Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic) only on a smaller scale.

A furnace and often more than one worker was needed to blow a large piece of glass. By contrast, beads can be made using a much smaller source of heat.

Glass beads can be hand-made using molten glass wrapped around a mandrel made of a specially coated steel. Today, these hand-made beads are formed over the flame from a propane torch but originally an oil or wax lamp was used, hence the name lampwork beads.



Machine-made solid beads began to appear in the 19th century. The molten glass is pressed into the two-part mold. Either a mandrel is pushed through the mold to form the hole or a pin is incorporated into the mold.

Today, machines are fully-automated but other semi-automatic ones are still in use.

## THE MAKING OF HOLLOW BEADS

As early as 1845, Czech artisans began to use their beads for glass Christmas ornament designs.

Beads made for jewelry and the fashion industry are usually solid with a small hole for thread. By comparison, beads for ornaments are more thin-walled. Ornament beads are blown into molds much the same way thick beads are made except for the introduction of air.



The rows or beads (anthers) are either left intact or broken apart into individual beads depending on the requirements for the ornament.

## CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS

In the early 1900s, most Christmas trees in the United States were adorned with homemade ornaments and decorations. That slowly changed as blown glass ornaments from Germany and beaded ornaments from Czechoslovakia began to reach America.

Gablonz, a village in Northern Bohemia in today's Czech Republic, was the center of glassmaking for centuries and Czech glass ornaments are often called "Gablonzer" whether they actually come from this town or not. Typical of Gablonz items are free or form blown beads which are strung on wires or string and skillfully assembled to give very imaginative ornaments. The United States was one of the largest importers of Czech glass ornaments and the Czech cottage industry greatly expanded to meet the American demand for their beaded glass Christmas ornaments.



In the 1920s, partly due to the incorporation of glass rings called “bangles,” more complicated ornaments appeared. The bangle is a circular ring in which beaded designs might be displayed or suspended.



Eventually, glass rods and more fanciful beads came to be used to create even more varied designs.

By the 1930s, the Czech beaded glass ornaments were representing complex designs such as insects, automobiles, windmills, baby pacifiers, chairs, airplanes, rocket ships, and (my favorite) lobsters.



## JAPANESE INTERPRETATION

For a brief period, Gablonz-looking glass bead ornaments were made in Japan. Most are small, abstract and of a similar compact size and shape. Finding one with a paper label is certainly a bonus and helps preserve the provenance of the piece.



## WWII COMMUNISM AND JAPAN

Prior to the move by Hitler to annex Czechoslovakia in 1938, many artists and craftspeople who could, left the region for their safety. During the years of Nazi occupation and World War II, the Czech glass industry lost many markets in Europe and overseas. Jewish artists were persecuted and murdered, and many Czech avant-garde artists were put in concentration camps.

From 1948 to 1989, under Communist rule, factory glass production of beads was turned over to heavy manufacturing and armaments since the production of beads was not considered an essential or approved industry.

## MODERN ORNAMENTS

In the 1990s Czech and Czech-like ornaments were made under the Christopher Radko brand. As with all reproductions and modern interpretations of older items, distinguishing between the old and the new can be difficult. Fortunately, the Radko ornaments are catalogued and well documented.



Rautis in the Czech Republic is one of the largest manufacturers and sellers of modern-day Czech bead ornaments. Rautis sells ornaments, kits, and even offers classes at their factory.

The interest in Czech glass bead ornaments appears to be growing especially among other Christmas collectors as they can still be found at reasonable prices.



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## CCA CONVENTION 2016

June 2-4

In

Cedar Rapids

Register at [czechcollectors.org](http://czechcollectors.org)

Or call

David Phelps at 515-975-7977

Renew your membership

Form is on-line at [czechcollectors.org](http://czechcollectors.org)

Or contact

David Fein at [dbf57@hotmail.com](mailto:dbf57@hotmail.com)

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