

Czechoslovakian Collectors Association



Spring Newsletter
May 2013

Made in Czechoslovakia

by

Rosie Bodien

So what glass treasures do you value? Have you inherited some cut glass? A glass figurine? A perfume bottle? Have you thrown out some things you will regret after reading this article? Did your ancestor blow glass or have a cottage industry of doing finish work? I will discuss some common glass items and some not so common glass items.

Czechoslovakia was a country from 1918 through 1992. On January 1, 1993, Bohemia & Moravia split with Slovakia peacefully. Thus Bohemia and Moravia are now called the Czech Republic. Slovakia is now the Slovak Republic. Thus any item signed Czechoslovakia or that has an old Czechoslovakia label is very collectible, due to the fact that Czechoslovakia no longer exists. There is another variation in spelling, too. It is Czecho-Slovakia.



During the First Republic (1918 to 1938) glass production was creative and extensive. During the "Second Republic" (Fall of 1938 to 1945) glass production did continue, but was very limited due to WWII. Glass production was nationalized during the "Third Republic" (1945 to 1948) when the national Jablonec Glassexport group was formed. But then the communists overthrew the government in February of 1948. This "Fourth Republic" continued nationalized glass production, with some changes, until the Velvet Revolution in 1989. Then the "Fifth Republic" continued thru 1992. At this point glass production got very creative. Now into the "Sixth Republic."

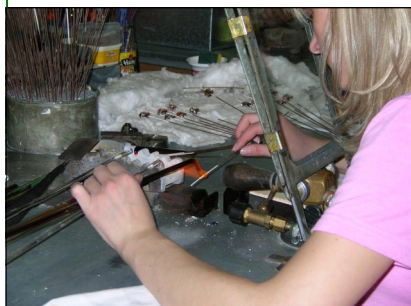
bigger glass producers face financial difficulties while individual private companies continue to function well.

No matter in which “Republic” Czech glass was made, it has a good reputation that stands on hundreds of years of glassmaking history. Many lovely glass items that were produced include beads, jewelry, buttons, figurines, vases, beverage sets, dishes, glassware, perfume bottles and sets, modern art glass, ashtrays, lamps, decorator items, decanters and miscellaneous items.

The first time I visited Kusak Cut Glass Works in Seattle, I was mesmerized by the sparkling cut and etched glass. That showroom is the first thing that enters my mind when thinking of Bohemian glass. Chuck Kusak’s grandfather was a glass cutter from Moravia who came to the USA in the early 1900s. Eventually settling in Seattle, WA, he started Kusak Cut Glass Works. Chuck is the third generation in his family to run the business. The company gets blanks for engraving from Moravské Sklárný Květná s.r.o. in Moravia. Its art glass is from Anton Rukel s.r.o. in Bohemia. (www.kusak.com)

We find that many people have cut and etched glassware as prized family heirlooms. For over 800 years Bohemian crystal has been produced. The first glass school was started in 1856 and produced competent cutters, painters, engravers and technicians. Some crystal is labeled Slovak. [See the June 2010 issue of *Naše rodina* for an article entitled “History of Glassworks in Slovakia.”]

Bohemian glass DOES come in other forms! Czechoslovak glass necklaces are my thing. They are marked Czechoslovakia on the jump ring. First Republic necklaces have metalwork links between the glass pieces. Glass stones are set in the metalwork pendants. They come in multitudes of colors and combinations. Of course there are First Republic necklaces and bracelets without metal links, too. Glass stones or beads are strung on strings. Lovely faceted shiny colored necklaces catch anyone’s eye. Sibylle Jargstorf’s *Baubles, Buttons and Beads the Heritage of Bohemia* is an excellent source of information about Bohemian jewelry or bead-making in the area of Jablonec. It shows all kinds of glass jewelry made in this area.



This leads us to glass beads. Beads from Bohemia have been exported for centuries. Czechs continued to make glass beads in Bohemia after it became a country. Many lovely bead necklaces, bracelets, earrings and pins were made for export and at-home consumption during most of the Republics. My mother-in-law had many Czech jewelry pieces. Pressmold beads, lampwork beads, jet glass beads, seed beads, faceted

beads, all of these were found in every bead shop in the states for many years. Some bead stores had “old Czech” collections of beads. In the last five to ten years, China has taken over bead-making. So bead stores don't have the huge collections of Czech beads any more. BUT GUESS WHAT.. the Chinese cannot make lampwork beads. Only the Czechs in the Jablonec area can make quality lampwork beads that bead stores will buy. [N.B. The Corning Museum of Glass will have a comprehensive exhibit of beads from all times and places from May 18, 2013— January 5, 2014.]

Have you seen these egg or figural shape glass beverage sets? They open horizontally in the middle, where there is a metal hinge & plate that holds a decanter and six little shot glasses. My dad said his folks had one once. Well, I am sure that one was broken, they are fragile. Each one that has survived is a miracle. Some are marked Made in Czecho-Slovakia with a sticker on the bottom. Some are marked with the same lettering but on the metal hinge. They are clear colored glass or corallene glass. Debbie Truitt says at least two factories had to have been involved in making them, a metal factory and a glass factory. Not much is known about their use. One explanation is that the priest would use these for giving communion. I really think they were used to serve homemade slivovice or becherovka !!! I have seen these in shapes of dogs, barrels, basketballs, elephants, cats and globes.



What is a muddler? It is a glass wand-like tool used to crush sugar or fruits in drinks. The Czechs made these muddlers with the head of an animal at the top and it is signed Czechslovakia on the circular underside. I have seen clear and colored dog heads, horse heads, eagle heads, squirrel heads, and fish. These could be called swizzle sticks, too.

My article “Czechoslovakian Perfumes 101” (*Czechoslovakian Collectors Association Spring Newsletter*, April 2011, p 1-4) did not mention the bottles with filigree work & glass medallions. Glass stones were also used in designs on the filigree work. These bottles sell for hundreds of dollars. The sizes range from little caged filigree purse bottles to medium and large dresser bottles. They are signed on the filigree or the bottom of the bottle itself.



Jaroslav Brychta was a teacher at the Zelezny Brod Glass School in the early 1920's. He developed a technique, the *hutni sklo* method, to make glass figurines with

different colored glass, using at least three people working together. These figurines depicted people in everyday work and activities. He made series of figurines, such as doctors, sailors, musicians, famous English characters, and many drunkards. Some bases held two figures, such as a person and an animal, or a person and a tree, etc. Železný Brod Sklo Glassworks made these figurines up to the 1990s. Now they are not made anymore.



Karl Palda designed and produced glass. His firm was located in Nový Bor, a glass-making hub, which is located north of Prague. Besides clear glass colored with geometric shapes, his company is known for decanters and liquor sets. Pictured is a raspberry colored duck decanter. The handles are the wings, the head flips open for pouring. There probably was a tray and little shot glasses that would have made it a set. It is signed Czechoslovakia on the metal of the hinge.

Place card holders made in Bohemia are exceptionally diverse and beautiful. Hoffmann designed all-glass place card holders. Other firms made them of intaglio glass with metal stands. Some are decorated with glass rhinestones. Some have molded flowers on a glass stand. Many were created in the 1930's and exported to the USA. These are what I mostly see on the internet for sale.



This is just the tip of the iceberg. Beautiful art glass is out there that has not been discussed. I recommend Robert & Deborah Truitt's two books, *Collectible Bohemian Glass, Volumes I and II* as guides to the various glass pieces and makers. A big thank you to Professor Frank Danes from Tacoma, WA who helped me understand the six republics.

CCA MEMBERSHIP REPORT — May 8, 2013

Dear Members;

We have 81 members renewed thus far.

48 Single memberships
16 Dual memberships
1 Institutional membership

Of this there are 3 new members since the renewal drive.
Thank you for all your help.

David Fein

CZECH EASTER CUSTOMS

By
John Marvin

Many of the beautiful folk customs still preserved in the Czech Republic and Slovakia are associated with the Easter festival (observed on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox) and with Easter Monday. From earliest times, the



awakening of Spring was greeted with decorated eggs. While the village girls were busy dying and painting chicken, duck and goose eggs, the boys were braiding together pussy willow branches into canes and switches with which to go courting.



Records indicate that the custom of painting and decorating egg shells (the white and the yolk are blown out through small holes at each end of the egg) was widespread in Bohemia as early as the 14th century. This tradition is one of the purest forms of folk art and has been preserved to the present day. Patterns and techniques vary widely from Bohemia to Moravia to Slovakia; however, basic methods for creating "kraslice" are quite similar.

The most common egg dying method is that of using a dye repellent, such as wax, to cover parts of a design not to be dyed. After dipping in the color solution and drying thoroughly, the wax is then wiped off and the lines it covered are white against a colored background. To ensure that lines remain white in ensuing dippings, wax must be applied each time to white areas and to other colors that are to be preserved. A traditional Bohemian egg uses dyes of red, yellow and black, with fine white lines separating colors.



A second technique is applying wax to the egg with a straight pin inserted in a wooden holder. The pin is dipped in colored wax, then puddled on the egg and quickly drawn away from the puddle, giving a nail shaped design. Many of these designs have their origin in Christian symbolism: 1 stroke - the nail itself; 3 - the three Passion days or the Holy Trinity; 5 - the five wounds; 7 - the seven last phases or the seven days of Holy Week; and 40 - the forty days of Lent.



A good eye and steady hand are necessary to decorate eggs in this manner. Other methods of decoration include covering eggs with various vegetable skins, such as onions, cabbage, beets, etc., and placing them in boiling water; cutting fine bits of straw and gluing them

to the eggs; coating the egg with wax and color, then scratching designs down to the white surface; drawing fine-line traditional patterns onto the egg with a pen; and painting flowers, chicks, and pussy willows over the entire surface with waterproof paints.



Once a girl has completed her task of decorating a basketful of colorful eggs, she carefully threads a ribbon or piece of string through each egg and awaits the arrival of the village boys, who go from door to door asking for eggs. A gentle tapping at the door signals the arrival of the first caller, who offers the girl his pussy willow switch. If the girl likes the boy, she will place one of her decorated eggs onto the switch; however, if she isn't at all interested in his intentions, she will grab the switch and beat the boy away.

At the end of the day, the young males gather together to count their eggs. The boy with the most eggs is the most popular in the village, while he who has the least is not well-liked. As for the girls, the girl who has given away all her eggs is bound for an early marriage. The girl who is left with her basket still full at the end of the day, or who has had no callers, is bound to remain an old maid.

A carry-over of this tradition continues after a couple marries. If a wife still thinks highly of her spouse at Easter, she will give him a special decorated egg. If no egg appears, watch out! There may be trouble ahead. Eggs are also presented to special people, such as grandparents, teachers, and friends. And a trip to the cemetery is customary during the Easter season, where sprigs of pussy willows festooned with decorated eggs are placed on graves of departed loved ones.

In some regions, particularly in Moravia and Slovakia, young people drench one another with cold water on Easter. According to ancient superstitions, this gives them health.



Another custom is the dividing of a hardboiled egg, by the father of the family, into segments that are then eaten by all members of the family. This ensures that they will all remain healthy and together the whole year long.

Traditional pastries and other delicacies, baked in the shape of a lamb, are also seen through the country as part of the Easter tradition.



Although many of the Easter customs are not practiced today by Americans of Czech or Slovak heritage, they still have profound meaning to all of us living in the 20th century.

President's Report by Dave Phelps

Happy Spring, at least it should be. We just had 7 inches of snow the first week of May! It is hard to imagine that Convention is just a month away and we still are scooping snow here in the Midwest. By now you have received your Convention packages and the registration early deadline is very near, as is the hotel deadline. We hope to see you all there. We have some great side trips planned which will make for a wonderful time. If you arrive early, there are numerous antique malls to visit. Who knows, you might find that rare piece of Czech glass or pottery for your collection.

I would like to put a call out for pictures of your collection for our webpage: "Collection of the Month". We have had three collections, but I'm sure you are tired of seeing the last one. If you would like to share your collection and knowledge, please contact the webmaster (currently me). All that is needed is a short introduction, midsize resolution pictures and a brief sentence or two on each picture. Remember fellow collectors enjoy seeing other collections almost as much as their own! The other fun website feature is the Flea Market Finds. I bet you have added a special piece to your collection that others would like to see.

The terms of both the **President and Publicity Director will be vacant** and need to be filled at the Convention. If you would be willing to serve, please contact a board member or the webmaster. We will also need a convention chair for 2014. Without your help, the Club cannot continue to survive.

Finally, we are always looking for ways to improve. Suggestions for the Club or the website can be sent to me at dave@czechpottery.com or to any of the board members. What would you like to see?

IN MEMORY of Gene Ferguson

We met Gene and Patti at the last CCGI convention in Kansas City, Missouri in 1999. We were new and didn't know anyone in the club or so we thought. We saw this couple in the lobby. They came over to greet us. Patti looked at our name tags and said "You must be Musicityusa....I'm Forewhales and this is my husband Gene." Our eyes lit up as we had sold and purchased Czech items from each other through Ebay on numerous occasions. Gene and Patti were very easy to talk to and made us feel welcome and at ease. There was an immediate bonding and it seemed we had always known each other.

Our friendship grew stronger as the CCA was established and the annual conventions moved forward. We visited with each other and we got to see Gene and Patti's fabulous collection of glass and pottery. We saw Gene's selection evolve as he became more interested in the higher end pieces.

We would talk on the telephone and he would always ask had we purchased any new Czech items. We would tell him what we had found and



then he would tell us all about his new purchases. He sent us photos of his

last finds. They were two Bellova lamps and they were beautiful. He was really excited. We got to see them on our visit to Shawnee last year after the Houston convention. That was the last time we saw Gene.

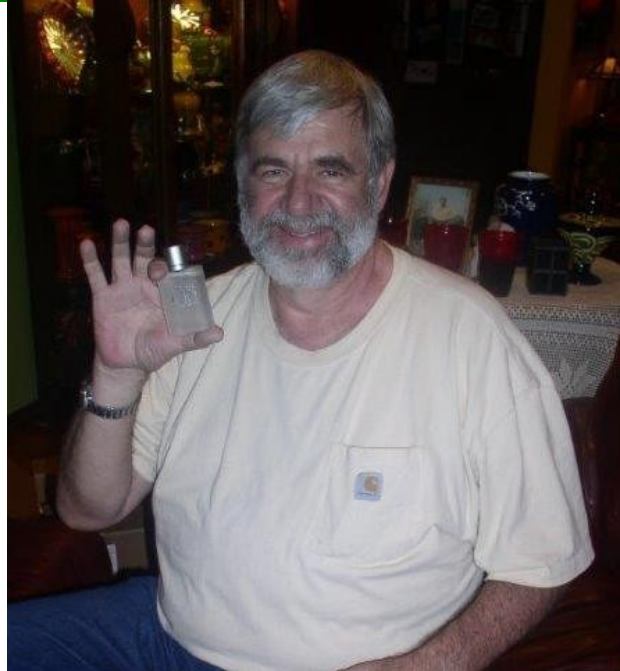
Gene was an easy man to get to know and like. He was non judgmental, down to earth and the kind of person you would want for a friend. There was no pretense or anything fake about Gene. What you saw was what you got.



Gene had three passions we knew about. They were his family, Czech glass and the Oklahoma City Thunder basketball team.

He held season tickets to the Thunder home games and was always there when they played in town. We were fortunate enough to see one of the games for the NBA championship between the OKC Thunder and Miami Heat teams while we were visiting him and Patti in Shawnee. Our team won!

Gene's love for Czech glass is well known by CCA members. He and Patti have brought photos of their collection to the conventions and some of their pieces were featured in one of the club journals. He would sometimes drive miles to see someone's collection and purchase items that were of interest to him. Their collection is awesome.



He loved his family. He was close to his two sons and grandchildren. Patti was the love of his life. This was obvious when you were around them. You could see the love in his eyes as he looked at her or the smile on his face when she touched him on the arm or held his hand. They loved each other very much.

We will always have our memories of all the good times we shared with Gene and Patti. He was a true friend and will be missed.

Written by Bob Stinson and Jerry Buchanan.

Treasurer's Report — Aggie Elwell

For the Period 03/01/12 – 02/28/13

Income	\$9,623.00
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>\$7,863.66</u>
Profit	\$1,759.34

Cash on Hand \$17,902.59

A more complete Treasurer's Report will be available at the Annual Meeting during the Convention in Cincinnati June 6 – June 9, 2013.

CCA CONVENTION 2013

The annual CCA convention will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio, on June 6-9. It will offer a tour of the Cincinnati Museum Center, and presentations by knowledgeable CCA Members about jewelry, pottery, and furniture. As always, there will be a silent auction, show and sale, mini-seminars at dealer booths, and a banquet with entertainment.



David Fein will speak about Czech Pottery. David continuously searches for new information about the Czech pottery companies and the import firms who brought their products to the US. One highlight of his talk will be the Czech figural utility pieces.



Aggie Elwell will present information about Czechoslovakian bizouerie (costume jewelry). Aggie has a comprehensive collection of jewelry made from glass beads, glass stones, wood, ceramic, ivory, and other materials. She has journeyed to Jablonec (the center of Bohemian jewelry making) to study the companies and their products.



Larry Goldman will discuss a decorative art not previously presented at CCA conventions—furniture. His focus is on the Arts & Crafts movement, as illustrated by this Josef Hoffmann circular table designed around 1910.



If you would like to present a mini-seminar on Saturday afternoon, contact David Fein (dbf57@hotmail.com or 305-673-8044) This is an opportunity to hold a discussion about a topic of your choice and to share your expertise.

On Friday, join the walking tour that will take you from Garfield Park, through Piatt Park, Over-the-Rhine, and Washington Park to Main Street. Along the way, the guide will discuss the architecture of the buildings and the history of the area. Topics will include saloons and Breweries, haunted buildings, riots, and ethnic relationships. The Mayberry Gastro Pub has been recommended for dinner.

Garfield Hotel (in downtown Cincinnati)
2 Garfield Place Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
888-744-9395 Toll Free: 888-717-1275 fax: 513-421-3729.

All rooms are suites, either one or two bedrooms, your choice. One bedrooms have a balcony. A block of rooms is reserved for us. Mention CCA for the rate. The cut-off for this rate is May 15th.

The front desk may tell you there are no rooms left. As of the middle of March there are. If the front desk tells you that, you should contact Mick Douthat (Director of Sales and Marketing) directly at 513.421.3355 (or 513.728.5394 cell or 513.421.1666 fax).