

1295 Bead Swag Cream and Sugar Evokes Thoughts of Spring

*"In the spring a young man's fancy
lightly turns to thoughts of love."*

-- from "Locksley Hall," Alfred,
Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate.

*"And in summer, and in autumn, and
in winter, see above."*

-- from "Rhymes for the Irreverent,"
Yip Harburg, lyricist of "Wizard of
Oz," "Finian's Rainbow," "Brother,
Can You Spare A Dime?" etc.

Now that we have had a moment in Poetry Corner, you may well ask what on earth this has to do with Heisey. As I was planning this article, it occurred to me that it might be published in the spring: spring, with flowers and birds and Easter eggs and, yes, poetry. Heisey didn't do much that reminds one of poetry, but there were certainly flower designs and flower containers and birds of all sorts. As for Easter eggs, what is more egg-like than 1295 Bead Swag? This pattern is, above all others, most frequently seen in Opal, certainly an egg enough color. It doesn't take too much imagination to look at those smoothly ovoid shapes with scalloped and toothed tops and think of hatched eggs. And the decorations, of which there are many on this pattern, are not that far removed from traditional Easter egg decorations. (Now that I've planted that egg idea in your mind, how about using some Emerald pieces in a Dr. Seuss theme? Paging Sam.)

1295 Bead Swag was an early pattern, as the number indicates. Actually, the number indicates that it was a late early pattern, if that makes sense. It was just at the time Heisey was switching to the shorter numbers for major patterns, such as

300, 305, 310, etc. Heisey did not name Bead Swag. In fact, I'd guess that a lot of us call it Beaded Swag. Since neither variant of the name is original to the pattern, either one will do. It just depends on whether your swag has beads on it or your beads fall in a swag. The generally accepted production dates are from around 1899 to about 1903, maybe as late as 1905.

The pattern was moderately large, but as far as creams and sugars, only one size was ever made. They were part of a table set, so they are generously sized. The sugar, as nearly all table sugars of the time, requires a cover. In these articles, I've gotten into the habit of showing the spoons that were included in the table sets, since the spoons are sometimes similar to the sugars. That is not the case for Bead Swag, but this photo looked so nicely balanced with them all in there that I included it anyway. There is no chance of confusing the two, since the spoon has a double-scalloped rim and the sugar is flat-topped to hold that lid. The sugar cover flares slightly to overhang the bottom and carries the seating rim with it, so the bottom doesn't have to.

The pattern design creates one problem for us collectors, and that is condition. Besides avoiding the usual chipped feet and rims, take a look at the swagging. The beads, being exposed at the girthiest part of the pieces, succumb to damage before almost anything else. Finding creams, sugars, or any other pieces that have no flaked or missing beads isn't very easy.

Opal is the most common color by a wide margin. The creams and sugars come in crystal and Emerald, too. I have never heard of any Bead Swag in Canary or Rose; it was probably too late for the first and not made in the second. While a few pieces, mostly goblets with souvenir decoration, can be found in rich custardy Ivorina Verde, I haven't seen the cream or sugar in that color. (There could be some differences of opinion there for those who use ultraviolet light. It turns out that there is surprising variation in the reactions of Opal under ultraviolet, and some shades of ivory are very pale. For instance, I have one Bead Swag sugar where the base reacts under UV as I'd expect for Opal. That is, it reacts not very much, but not completely dead as sometimes reported. Ultraviolet reveals that the cover of this particular sugar, which looks exactly the same cool white color in normal light, has a dose of uranium salt. That makes it glow under UV in a color similar to the reaction of Ivorina Verde. The gradations of color under normal and ultraviolet light for both Opal and Ivorina Verde demand their own article sometime.)

Decorations are abundant on this pattern. There is something about the whiteness of Opal that makes it look even more bare than crystal when undecorated. Flowers and glazes were applied with abandon to the Opal pieces. Crystal and Emerald received bands of color and gold. Sometimes colors were mixed and matched for a truly festive look. Heisey listed a number of decorations itself, including these: No. 34, gold (it wasn't said exactly where the gold was placed); No. 40,

which included edges, beads, and wide band of gold, with two narrow green bands; No. 45, blue on base with engraving on colored portion (this decoration was on crystal); No. 50, one wide green and two narrow blue bands on plain portion above beads; No. 56, gold edge and beads and one wide and two narrow gold bands around (this one is relatively common today); No. 57, like No. 56, but lacking the gold edge; and No. 60, amberette on crystal. Gold-banded pieces are not too difficult to find, but colored bands are uncommon. Floral decorations are the most common ones in my experience, usually featuring a simple 5-petaled prairie rose, a more

fully petaled pink or red shrub rose, or a pyrethrum-like daisy in their most common forms. Another familiar decoration is a wide ruby band in which scrollwork has been engraved, appearing only on crystal so far as I've seen. The Opal set in the photo features pink bases with blue beads, an especially spring-like presentation. These are just the highlights. Doubtless, you can find other variations, too.

The cream and sugar, as well as the spoon, each rests on a small, raised foot. The underneath of the foot is always impressed with a classic Heisey star. Usually, the star is 18 points, but I have seen at least one

cream with 20 points. There is a similar discrepancy in Bead Swag tumblers, most having 16 points but some having 18 points. Perhaps fewer points were easier to manage and so were preferred. While an occasional piece of Bead Swag is marked, I have not seen creams or sugars that were.

A passable copy of the Bead Swag tooth pick can be found (passable until you pick the thing up, at any rate), but I have never seen copies of the cream or sugar. The original moulds have long since disappeared, quite possibly in one of the war-time metal drives.

Eric Tankesley-Clarke

Have you found them on a train? Have you found them on a plane? Where is the most unusual place you found some Heisey? You know where to let me know, at heisey@embarqmail.com.



Vital Statistics

1295 Bead Swag

Cream: Height, tallest point, about 4½"; length, spout to handle, 4 3/8"; width across mouth, 2 5/8"; width, widest point, 3½"; diameter of foot, 2½".

Sugar: Height with cover, 6"; height without cover, 3¾"; width across mouth, 3¼"; width, widest point, 4"; diameter of foot, 2 5/8".

Spoon: Height, tallest point, just under 4"; width across mouth, 2 7/8"; width, widest point, 3½"; diameter of foot, 2½".

All have fire-polished feet. Usually 18-point stars, but occasionally 20-point. Unmarked.