

NUMBER, PLEASE?

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When I was a child, I loved visiting my mother's parents. They lived in town. Not only that, they lived on the square, right next door to — are you ready for it? — the town switchboard. I was just sure it was the actual place where everyone rang up Central and she asked for "number, please?" More likely, it was where Opal called to get gossip about Ruby. Nevertheless, in my five year-old estimation it was clear that my grandparents were not only *in town*, but also *uptown*.

Heisey collectors are always trying to find the number, please. That's part of the fun for many of us, digging through books and sundry scraps until we find that definitive identification. Fortunately, there is a lot of material around these days to help. When a piece is identified, we have a handy, conventional way of referring to it — just give pattern number, pattern name, and the piece. If, for example, one collector talks about the 1205 Fancy Loop hotel sugar she just found, other Heisey collectors can immediately picture the piece and they can happily compare notes, assured that each is talking about the same thing.

It isn't always that easy.

The pattern numbers used for Heisey glass fall into three broad groups: (1) 1-7000; (2) any other numbers in the 7000's; and (3) numbers in the 8000's. (We won't get into the 9000's used for some undocumented decorations. Those aren't numbers for the glass itself, anyway.) Any piece with a pattern number from 1 up through 7000 sports an authentic, factory-assigned Heisey number. These are the ones we are going to find in their catalogs, price lists, or advertisements. These are also the numbers that we really want to know.

A fair amount of pieces are known by numbers somewhere within the 7xxx range (but 7000 itself is not included, since that was a bona fide Heisey-assigned number). The 7000's were assigned by Clarence Vogel, one of the pioneer researchers and collectors. He didn't use all the numbers in that range. He published numbers only through 7183, although it is possible he assigned a few more than that.

Clarence began assigning numbers in the late

1960's (before HCA or other formal study groups were even formed) as a way to keep track of pieces that could not be found in the Heisey material he had. Some numbers assigned by Vogel have become obsolete since genuine Heisey numbers have been found, so not all his numbers are currently in use. As more and more original factory material came to light, it was bound to happen.

For example, Vogel gave the number 7055 to the Heisey Hairpin pattern. Since then, we've learned that pattern's original Heisey number is 477 (fig. 1). It is unlikely now that you'll find Heisey Hairpin pieces identified with the Vogel number, but you can show how up-to-date you are if you do. (Not exactly the same as going to Kansas City, though. Everything's up-to-date there.) If you are fortunate enough to have the Vogel *Heisey Glass Newscasters*, published from 1971 until 1986, you may see how Clarence himself sometimes announced the original Heisey number and recommended dispensing with his 7xxx number. Other times other researchers found the correct number.



Figure 1

In 1971, HCA was formed and within a year or so it had begun assigning numbers, too. HCA used numbers beginning with 8000. Just as with the Vogel numbers, some of them were later identified, so sometimes the 8xxx number has dropped from view and the true Heisey number is used instead. An example of that is the 8014 Gondola floral bowl, which we now know as the 132 Sunburst floral bowl (fig. 2).



Figure 2

Between Vogel's 7000's and HCA's 8000's being assigned at the same time, there was bound to be a different sort of confusion, where a piece ended up with more numbers than it knew what to do with. Another obsolete HCA number is 8008, which is the same as Vogel's 7055, which is really 477 Heisey Hairpin. Yes, sometimes HCA assigned numbers to patterns that Vogel had also numbered. Various reasons account for that. Without any formal coordination, it wasn't easy to keep track of who had published which first.

The ultimate, of course, would be to find Heisey numbers for every piece identified by either Vogel or HCA, maybe in some long-forgotten bin of Heisey-related papers. You never know when a box from an old department store might contain a Heisey catalog unseen for decades. (I have this daydream that someday I'll find a huge carton with a giant blue diamond on the side. Inside will be 50 thick Heisey catalogs, all different and none ever seen before. I'm sure it will be sitting next to the barrels of Rose and Trial Blue glass I also expect to find.) The sad fact is, however, that a great many of the Vogel and HCA numbered items remain unknown in the Heisey factory literature, so we're stuck with those 7xxx and 8xxx numbers until something more is known. For example, it is still correct to refer to an 8029 Princess Lily goblet (fig. 3) or a 7052 Diamond Grid puff box (fig. 4).



Figure 3



Figure 4

In short, then, numbers in the 7000's or 8000's usually should be thought of as temporary numbers. Once a piece has been identified with its Heisey factory number, we can stop using the temporary number and relegate it to a curiosity. Of course, if the genuine Heisey number never re-appears, "temporary" will last forever. On the other hand, Heisey collectors are nothing if not optimistic. For any one of the 7xxx or 8xxx numbers, the hope is that eventually, just possibly, the "real" Heisey number will show up.

Or will it? What about those pieces that had no numbers, ever? In a few rare instances, Heisey never gave numbers. One example is their early jelly jars (or jelly tumblers, as some price lists called them). Whether it was in catalog illustrations or in price lists, these jelly tumblers were always just described, in terms of volume and little else, with no number in sight. For the screw cap jelly HCA was perhaps overzealous, but someone gave it a number of 8042 (fig. 5). (For some reason, the other jellies were not assigned HCA numbers.)



Figure 5

Now we're left in a quandary. Was assigning a number doing us a favor by allowing us to refer to the screw cap jelly concisely, or was it misleading to assign a number to something that never had one? Normally, we'd get rid of the "temporary" 8xxx number when the real one was found. Should we dump the 8042 number because we know the jelly never had a number? That doesn't seem productive. On the other hand, if we leave the jelly with its "temporary" number made permanent, should we search out other pieces that Heisey never numbered and finish their work for them by assigning new numbers? Do you get the feeling we're getting long on questions and short on answers?

Where can you find all these assigned numbers? That's a great question, and not easily answered. Vogel's Volume 4 has an index that includes most of his earlier numbers. Later Vogel numbers, though, must be sought out in other ways. Scouring his old Newscasters is one way. The Index of Heisey Patterns lists many numbers — original Heisey ones, Vogel numbers, and HCA ones — but it omits a variety of published numbers in each of those series. While the Index lists numbers, it doesn't tell you where to go for more information.

Many of the HCA-assigned pattern numbers have been published in the Heisey News. But hold your hurrahs even if you have every last one of the Heisey News in your possession. It seems that some numbers in the 8000's were never published, not in the News, not anywhere. In talking with Walter about these, I learned that he has long been on the lookout for a master list of the numbers. If anyone made such a list, it has not seen the light of day for many years.

What about those missing numbers? There's always the chance I overlooked something. But if I didn't, either the numbers were skipped and never used or they were assigned but never published. For instance, I have not found a reference for 8022. As long as I'm mentioning them, the other missing numbers are 8043, 8050, 8064, 8075, 8076, and 8080. Also, I'm missing a few socks.

One of the missing numbers, 8043, requires some explanation. The *Index of Heisey Patterns* includes 8043 for the Jay goblet. However, the only other published reference

for Jay that I have found is in a 1982 issue of the *Heisey News*, and there it was given number 8049 (fig. 6). Other than the *Index* entry, I have found nothing else for 8043. The *Index* does not have anything for 8049. It appears that the two numbers got confused in preparing the *Index* and 8049 is the correct number for Jay, while 8043 was never truly published. (Not that I'm blaming anyone. Far from it. You try putting together a list of over 1500 things and see how many get confused.)

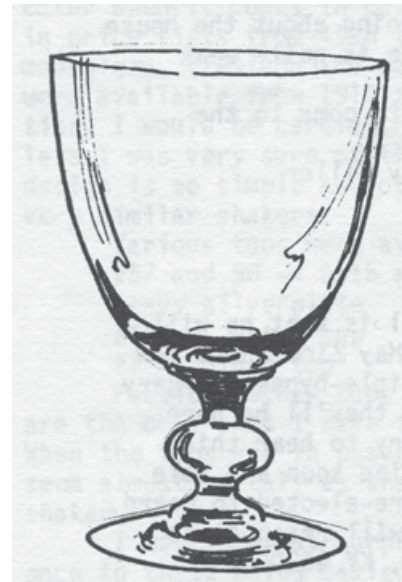


Figure 6

It is possible that these "skipped" numbers were assigned to items that never made it into the *News*. If so, it is also possible that the owners were told of the newly assigned numbers. If any of you could give me information on any of these seven missing 8xxx numbers I would be forever in your debt. Well, I'd be grateful for a long time, anyway. Finding one or two of those socks would go a long way, too.

While some numbers were skipped, a few 8xxx numbers were used twice. Sometimes that occurred when the real number was quickly found. Apparently in a spirit of thriftiness, the HCA number would then be re-used for another item. An example of that is 8055, which was first used for a pattern called Rhoda. Later, it was learned that 8055 Rhoda was the same as 3379 Pyramid (fig. 7). Someone then used 8055 for a plate called Ribbed Empress (fig. 8).

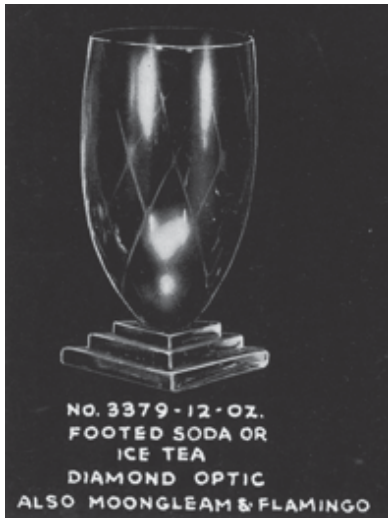


Figure 7

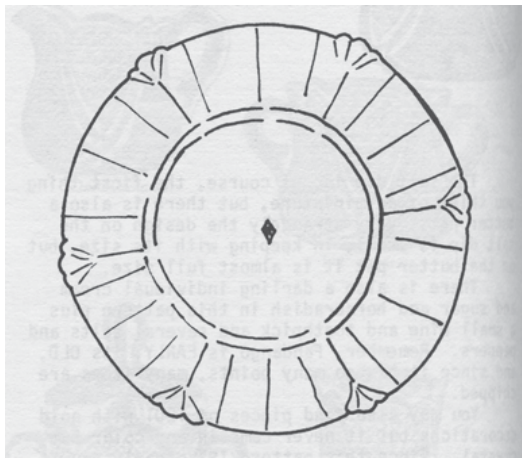


Figure 8

Other times, duplication appears to have been due to oversight. The number 8041 was assigned both to a funnel and to the Peacock Eye tumbler (fig. 9). As far as I know, both pieces still carry that number.



Figure 9



Figure 10

The last number for which I have found a record was 8087, and it was one of those used twice. In 1992, it was applied to the Rarey cream and sugar. Someone later realized this was identical with Vogel's 7068 Four Arch (fig. 10). In 1993, the number 8087 was re-used for the Walker Drape stem. That is the last number I have found that HCA assigned.

Somehow, HCA got out of the habit of giving numbers. It wasn't always great about handing them out even before it gave up altogether.



Figure 11

During that period from 1971 to 1993 when HCA was actively assigning numbers some items got published with no numbers at all. We have no way of knowing whether someone assigned numbers behind the scenes or not. An example of that is the Carlene goblet (fig. 11). Carl Sparacio wrote about this rare goblet with an unusual optic in 1977. As far as I can find, no number has ever been published for this piece. Given the timing, I almost suspect that 8022, one of my missing numbers listed above,

might belong to Carlene, but I have no way of knowing.

Now let me take you back to the beginning. Remember how I said at the start of this piece that all numbers from 1-7000 were assigned by Heisey? As it turns out, there is at least one exception. Naturally, there had to be; consistency and Heisey don't necessarily go together. There is a number floating around, 4225A, which is not an original Heisey designation. It refers to a cocktail shaker, called Cobel Prototype on the assumption that it was an early design for what became 4225 Cobel. You can read about it in a couple of issues of the *Heisey News* from 2000. Unfortunately, Cobel Prototype's number (not assigned by HCA) could create some confusion, since Heisey used the "A" suffix for Eva Zeisel designs. An example of a Zeisel number is 1637A Town and Country; there is no plain 1637 in the Heisey pattern lines. And that's the way it is with the other Zeisel designs. Clearly, Ms. Zeisel had nothing to do with Cobel Prototype. Had this been published in the *News* before 1993, the shaker might have been given an 8xxx number. Unless someone decided to skip it, of course.

If you're a real stickler (you know who you are), you might quarrel with another statement I made at the start, about those 9000's. In a couple of recent benefit auctions, the number 9960 has appeared, attached to at least two different pieces. In fact, that is not a properly assigned number. It has been used as a number in the Museum database to help track pieces that have never had properly assigned numbers. But it was never intended for publication and shouldn't be used for identification purposes as pattern number.

The numbers may have quit, but discovery has not. Collectors are still scouring booths, scavenging garage sales, rifling through estate sales, and trolling the internet to find unknown, unsuspected patterns. With the doubtfulness of assigned numbers, it put

us at a loss when trying to refer to them. Caution dictated that no one rush in and assign numbers willy nilly. What if that master list reappeared and numbers overlapped? Think of the confusion. Never mind that Heisey did not pay us the same favor—they threw around numbers easily, generously allowing multiple patterns to share a number to confuse and annoy collectors forever more.

Numbers are handy and unambiguous, although not everyone remembers them easily. Names alone can be unwieldy or unclear, but are often more easily remembered. The ideal is to have both names and numbers assigned to new patterns as they appear. At this point we are left with close to 20 published patterns that have come to light over the years that seem never to have been given numbers, and others that have never been published at all. So where do we go next?

After allowing for the possibility that even more HCA numbers may have been assigned than we know, we need to resume number assignment. After talking with Walter, we agreed that 8100 would be a good place to start. That leaves a gap in case that elusive master list ever appears. It is also a convenient way of recognizing an HCA pattern number as one recently assigned.

As time and space permit, I plan to write about some of these unnumbered pieces, many of which have been mentioned at one time or another in the *News*. Along the way, I'll also introduce a few pieces that have never been published. Either way, it will give an opportunity to attach numbers to them so we can speak confidently of these forlorn items in the future. That would really be uptown.

Hello, Central. Know any of the Heisey gossip? Even if you don't, I've got your number. Write me at heisey@embarqmail.com