

STEIN COLLECTORS INTERNATIONAL

PROSIT



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The Beer Stein Magazine

December 2021

Really Big Steins!
By Ron Gray



A Sampling of Building and Tower Steins
By Mike Adkins



Photos From the Road
Fifty-eighth Installment
By Ron Fox



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2021 SCI Convention - Wilmington, DE
Photo collage by Chuck Keiser

A Sampling of Building and Tower Steins

By Mike Adkins

Thoroughbred Stein Verein

A visitor to Germany will be treated to the sight of many beautiful buildings including churches, city halls, towers, and gates. Some date to Roman times. Others have a more recent history. Stein producers have modelled several of their pieces on these buildings. This article will examine some examples of building and tower steins. None of these steins are dated. The heyday of character steins was from 1888 to 1910. Unless otherwise noted, I assume each Stein was produced within this period.

The first Stein (Pictures 1a,b,c) is a red brick tower produced by Hanke. At first glance it resembles one of the towers from Lübeck's Holsten Gate. However, a closer examination reveals several differences in the architectural details. I have not been able to identify an actual tower that this Stein represents. The $\frac{1}{2}$ liter Stein is 9.5 inches in height. It is marked 1541 on the bottom. The left side shows two entry ways into the tower. The right side has houses abutting the tower. By far the most interesting decoration and detail is found on

the back of the Stein, featuring many windows and a doorway at the bottom.

A tourist visiting Munich wishing to take home a souvenir Stein will have many decorative themes to choose from. Steins featuring the Munich Child, Oktoberfest, and the Hofbrauhaus are abundant. If the collector desires a figural Stein, he or she will most likely end up with a Stein depicting one of the towers of the Frauenkirche (Cathedral of Our Dear Lady).

The church was the second to be built in Munich and was consecrated in 1494. It is estimated to hold 20,000 standing people. Benches for common people were a much later addition. Since this was Munich's second church and the city's population was only at 13,000 the time, this was a very ambitious project.

The most prominent features of the church are its twin front towers which were finished in 1525. Each tower is 323 feet tall and topped by an onion shaped copper dome modelled after

the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Since the church is built on Munich's second highest point, the towers are a defining image of the Munich skyline (Picture 2). City ordinances prohibit any building taller than 99 meters (325 feet). Given the church's high building site, they will be the skyline's major feature long into the future.

Picture 3 is a 10.5 inch, 1.0 Liter stoneware Stein showing the top three tiers of the tower. The topmost tier sports small windows. The middle section shows louvered windows and the bottom the tower clock. The large thumb-lift (Picture 4) has the Munich Child on a stylized shield; a small, checkered insignia of Bavaria is shown at the child's left foot. The Stein is marked T.W. is on its bottom. The T. W. stands for Theodore Wieseler, a Nuremberg glass manufacturer and distributor. The Stein was made for Wieseler by Merkelbach & Wick. A $\frac{1}{2}$ Liter version of the Stein exists.

Picture 5 shows a 1.0 Liter hand painted porcelain Frauenkirche tower



1a



1b



1c



stein produced by Schierholz as a special order for Munich distributor Martin Pauson. The stein stands 13 inches tall. The hand painting is very detailed. It features a Munich Child on a shield at the bottom on the face of the stein. A shield with the Bavarian coat of arms is on the left side (Picture 6). Silhouettes of different individuals appear in each of the louvered windows at the top of the stein. On the front a couple looks out the window; on the left side a monk can be seen reading a book. The right side (not shown) features a praying monk. At the rear of the stein a shield bears the mark: "Martin Pauson Munchen, Gesetzl Geschutz N126". The bottom of the stein has a lithophane of the Statue of Bavaria which overlooks the Theresienwiese (Oktoberfest grounds). The stein was most likely produced in the 1890s. Research by Ammelounx, et al, found that

this stein was first advertised by Paulson in Munich in June of 1889.

Picture 7 is a .5 Liter porcelain stein distributed by Josef Mayer. Mayer's name is impressed on the pewter shank. Mayer special ordered stein bodies from various manufacturers. He most likely had a pewter works among his holdings and often applied his own pewter work. The stein is 9.75" tall and features an onion dome lid. The thumb-lift (Picture 8) has both towers of the Frauenkirche. A small Munich Child is painted at the bottom on the front of the stein. The bottom's lithophane shows a man and two women sitting at a tavern tale.

This stein is clearly meant to be taken as a Frauenkirche souvenir stein by less than discerning tourists. But even a casual comparison between this stein

and the first two Frauenkirche steins will reveal that the body is a different building. The top tier of the building has a clock rather than the correct small windows. The bottom tiers have cathedral style glass windows rather than louvered windows.



The building is in fact the central tower of the Berlin City Hall (Picture 9) which was completed in 1869. It was heavily damaged during World War II. It was rebuilt and reopened as the East Berlin City Hall in 1956. After reunification,

the building was refurbished. In October of 1991, it reopened as the City Hall of a reunified Berlin.



10



11

Picture 10 is a $\frac{1}{2}$ Liter porcelain stein of the city hall produced with no intent to deceive. The decoration featuring salmon, grey-brown, and black colors offer a nice contrast. The $10\frac{3}{4}$ inch tall stein is unmarked. It has a lithophane of a man on a bicycle. The thumb-lift (Picture 11) features leaves and a flower.



12

One of the most commonly seen type of tower stein is modelled on a circular gate tower of Nuremberg. As part of fortifications completed in the early 1500s, there are several of these towers surrounding the city. Picture 12 shows one such tower, the Vestner-



13

turm, from a 1901 postcard. While the towers are similar, there are differences among them. Most of the steins seem to be based on the Frauentorturm. The tower is distinctive for its vertical series of arched windows with a round window above.

The first tower stein (Picture 13) is marked:

F&M
N
G. G. Leykauf
5216

The 5216 is a Marzi & Remy model number. The pewter work was applied by Felsenstein & Mainzer, and the stein was then distributed by G. G. Leykauf. Both are located in Nuremberg. The $\frac{1}{2}$ Liter stein is $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches tall. Each side has a circular scene en-



14



15

closed by bricks (Pictures 14 and 15). One is a scene of Nuremburg; the other shows a relief of Hans Sachs (1494 – 1576), a famous Meistersinger. He holds two shields. One shield features a lyre and the other the coat of arms of Nuremburg. A sign giving Greetings from Nuremberg is under the handle. The thumb-lift is the Goose-man of Nuremburg.

The next stein (Picture 16) is an unmarked pewter variation of the tower. The sides each have the same scene of Nuremburg (Pictures 17). It has a $\frac{1}{2}$ Liter capacity and stands 9 inches tall. Like the prior stein, the thumb-lift is the

Gooseman of Nuremburg.

The third Nuremburg tower stein (Picture 18) is another T.W. stein. The $\frac{1}{2}$ Liter stein is only 8 inches tall. Note that it lacks the horizontal pennant flying atop the tower that the previous steins featured. The thumb-lift (Picture 19) has a helmet and gorget atop a shield, all enclosed by vine work. The $\frac{1}{2}$ Liter stein is 8 inches tall. A 1.0 Liter version of the stein also exists.



16



18



19



17



20

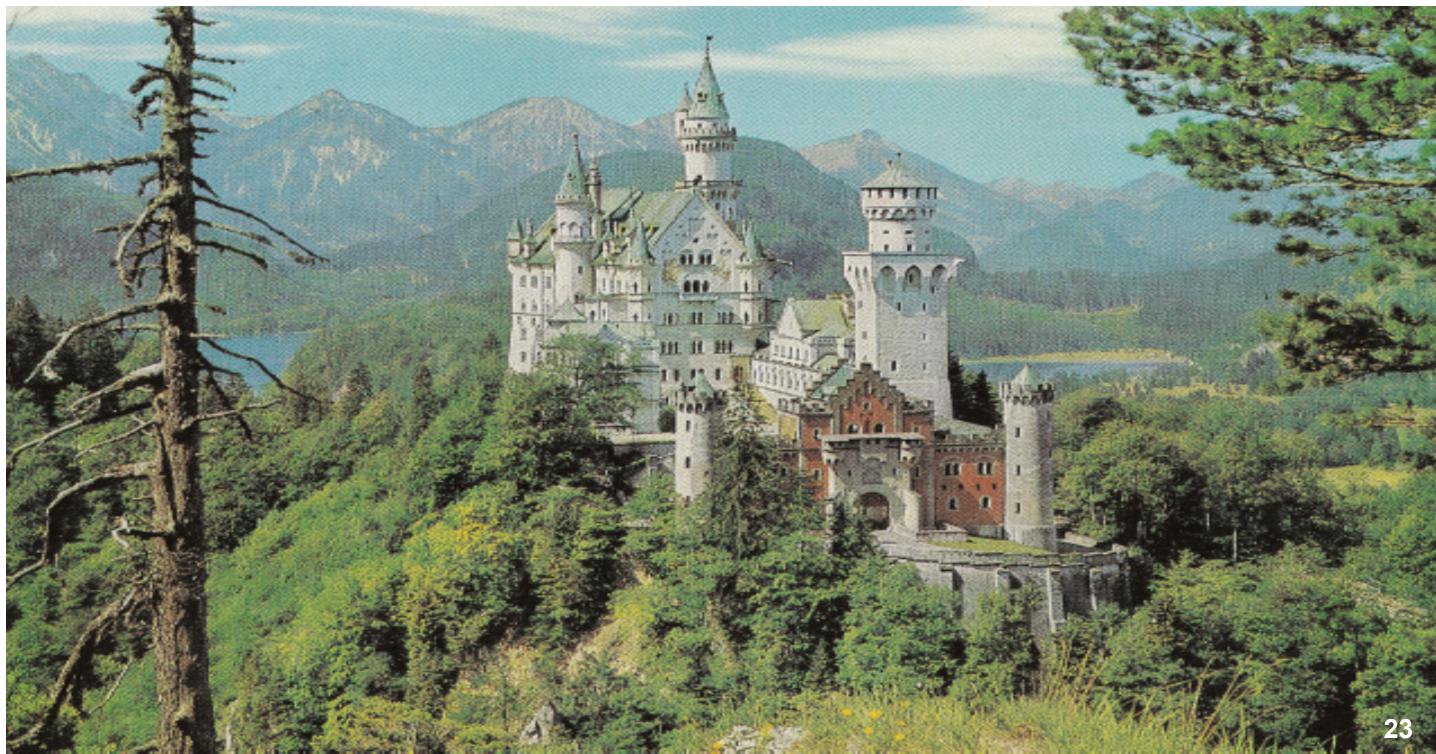


21



22

The next stein (Pictures 20 and 21) is an unusual, stylized version of the tower. Blue and grey vines wrap around the brickwork. Note the stairs and door next to the handle. The sign next to the door reads "Entrance to the Tower." The $\frac{1}{2}$ Liter stein is 10 inches tall. The thumb-lift (Picture 22) shows a helmeted young boy holding two shields. Each shield displays an eagle.



23

A green/brown version of the stein was also produced.

A very popular tourist attraction is Neuschwanstein Castle (Picture 23) in southern Bavaria. It was built by King Ludwig II. Construction began in 1869. While never fully completed, he was able to take provisional residence in 1884. The king lived in the palace for only a total of 172 days before his death in 1886. Had it been finished; the castle would have had more than two hundred rooms on five floors with a total floor space of nearly 65,000 square feet.

Our final stein (Pictures 24a,b,c) is based upon the castle. Produced by King Werk, it is the only modern stein included in this article. Its capacity is 1 ½ Liters. The rectangular base of the stein is seven inches by five inches. The tallest tower is ten inches high. A pewter plate under the lid is inscribed:

Neuschwanstein
Erbaut v Konig Ludwig d. 2.v.
Baern v. 1869 - 1886

The stein is hand painted and its thumb-lift (Picture 24c) is a gilded crown.

my mind, building and tower steins are a welcome addition to the character stein family of categories. Whether built for administration, inspiration or defense, the buildings upon which they are based allow us a glimpse into German history and architecture. The stein designers have done an excellent job of meshing the requirements of scale and accuracy of portrayal into their drinking vessels.

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An Early Christmas and Service Time Remembrance Stein

By Peter Meinlschmidt



Here I would like to describe an early Christmas and service time remembrance stein, which, additionally, exhibits a quite unusual feature. Pictures 1-4 show a half liter pottery stein with military paraphernalia (spiked helmet, backpack, and rifle pyramid) as a center motif framed on both sides by a red (slightly rolled up) shoulder board with the yellow number "15". Beneath the upper rim of the stein one can see the inscription "Erinnerung an meine Dienstzeit in Neuburg" (In remembrance of my service time in Neuburg) and "15. Regt" (15th Regiment). These are the only inscriptions on the stein body with the rear side of the stein being left blank (see Picture 4).

This sparse information refers to the "15th Royal Bavarian Infantry Regiment King Albert of Saxony", with this designation only being carried in the period from 25 April 1875 to 28 April 1903. Effective from 10 May 1905 until 1914 the regiment's name was "15. Infanterie-Regiment König Friedrich August von Sachsen." The honorary chiefs of this unit were almost always the reigning kings of Saxony and the regiment had invariably been garrisoned in the city of Neuburg an der Donau (on the Danube) in Bavaria starting from 1828.

The stein has the typical spindle top pewter lid of the "early steins" and the thumblift features some kind of civilian floral decor. However, three inscriptions have been engraved on the lip of the lid, i.e. "14. Komp." (14th company) "Maier" (a family name) and "Weihnachten 1896" (Christmas 1896) (see Pictures 5 and 6). This indicates that a soldier named "Maier" served at Christmas time of 1896 with the 14th company of this regiment at Neuburg.

This is interesting given the fact that all German infantry regiments did have - in addition to their usual 12 companies (organized into 3 battalions) - two additional companies (organized as a 4th battalion) in the period from 2 October 1893 until 1 April 1897. This means that all infantry regiments did have a 14th and 15th company, each, during this four-year period. As of 1897 these 4th battalions were summarily used to form up additional and separate infantry regiments. Thus, for example, the 14th company of the 15th Bavarian infantry regiment was used to establish the 21st Bavarian infantry regiment.

Remembrance and/or regimental steins related to these 4th battalions that only existed for a short time are relatively rare and can easily be over-



looked. Noteworthy is also that a soldier had commissioned this stein for himself for the Christmas holidays in 1896. This author would like to thank Mr. Peter Fischer (Fischer Antik & Design company, Kümmersbruck/Amberg) for providing the stein pictures.



Unusual Drinking Vessels

By Martin Kiely

Unique or unusual drinking vessels have always appealed to me. I think John A. Ey, Jr. in June 1985 was the first author to address the subject in **Prosit** about an agate tankard. Next, Lisolette Lopez in June 1986, wrote an article titled *A Staghorn Tankard*. Much time passed until Stephen L. Smith, in June 2005, informed us about *A Cork Beer Stein*.

Ron Fox enlightened us in June 2006 about steins made from unusual materials (agate) and in Dec 2006 (serpentine). Judy Stuart, in Dec 2006, wrote on *Basket Weave Steins*. I wrote about *Plaster Tankards Made by Plasta Crafts Company* in June 2013, and *Chalkware Tankards and Statues* in September 2013. **Prosit**, March 2018, published my article titled *Erhart and Sohne* on a rare cigar lighter in the shape of a tankard. Mark Rossman told us about a flea market find in the September 2019 **Prosit** - a stein carved out of coal titled *My Hard Rock Stein*. I apologize if I missed any other articles written on the subject in **Prosit**.

Possibly another article on unusual drinking vessels might interest some of our members.

Pictures 1 and 2 show a 900 ML Grafenthal Porzellan Fabrik Drinking Pot made in Thuringia Germany circa 1886. The pot features a Victorian woman wearing an apron embossed with the words "Kafee und Biere Das lob ich Mir" (coffee and beer pleases me). The pouring spout is a drinking boot. This coffee/beer pot is a decorative item meant for display and not daily use. Marks are a capital G with two vertical lines through the G capped on either end with an arrowhead.

Picture 3 is a 425 ML banded cork tankard. The eleven overlapping bands on the body are held in place by cork pegs and a wide middle band. The handle is bent and formed using three strips of cork. The handle is secured in place by tucking it under band #3 on the top and bottom. No marks.



Picture 4 is a 6" high bamboo tankard with a set on carved wood lid and handle. Two metal bands hold the bamboo body in place. A brass metal lion rampant is on the body suggesting it might be of Scottish origin. No marks.



Picture 5 is a 16 1/4" high bamboo stein including the set-on wooden lid with a squatting native man. The lid and finial are carved out of one piece of wood.



6



7

The carved bamboo handle (Picture 6) is held in place with braided vines. Etched spread wings decorate the body. I like this stein very much regardless of whether it is unique or a tourist item. No marks. Both this stein and the bamboo tankard in the above paragraph have shrunk so one cannot get an accurate liquid capacity.

Picture 7 is a 900 ML beaker. The body is divided into four sections separated by three grooves. Each of the upper three sections has four clay prunts and four relief cavaliers wearing plumed hats. It makes me think "Siegburg" although I have never encountered a Siegburg beaker. No marks.

Pictures 8 and 9 show a 750 ML silver plate ale bowl to be used as a centerpiece on the table. Beer could be placed in the bowl for guests to refill their glasses from a small vessel in the shape of a duck (missing). It would be more practical to fill the bowl with wine or liquor if the guests were in a festive mood and liked plenty to drink. A Swedish Crested Blue Duck, complete with head feathers and a heart shaped white bib on his chest, are presented on both sides of the bowl. No marks, but the ducks on the bowl suggest it might be from Sweden.



8



9

Picture 10 is a 1 L grey stoneware stein from Germany. The painted shield on the body of a washer woman (launderess) allows it to be classified as an occupational stein. I do not think the occupation of a laundress is a subject of many occupational steins. There

are some illegible etched words on the brown body. Possibly a tribute to a wife or mother who toiled as a washer woman to help raise her family.



11



12

Picture 11 is a 675 ML cast steel gate valve character stein; Picture 12 is the back view. The stein is very well made. The letters on the body P J V stand for P.J. Valves, a British Firm established

in 1976 who manufacture industrial valves. I thought it would be easy to obtain information about this stein by emailing the head office in the U.K. and their branch office in Houston, Texas. Unfortunately, there was no reply. Possibly one of our members could add more information. I wonder about the quantity of the steins made, and if they were sold or given to some employees and valued customers.



13

Picture 13 is a 950 ML handmade 19th century metal stein. The body was made from a cut out flat piece of material which was laid flat on a bench. The prunts were punched out, the material was turned over, and a chisel was used to make freeform decorative vertical lines. The flat material was then bent, shaped, and welded to make the body of stein. The bottom and handle were welded in place. The prunts are purely decorative. They do not serve their normal function which is to prevent a vessel from slipping through your fingers. The handle eliminates that possibility. Finally, the blacksmith crimped the lid, punched out the center, formed the hinge, and welded it to the body. Originally the stein was painted black. No marks.

Picture 14 is a 675 ML terra cotta drinking cup. The interior of the cup and body is unfinished.

My philosophy is if a piece is unusual, and the asking price is moderate, I will take a chance. I am much more wary if the price is high and I am not sure it is authentic. The Antique Roadshow from Birmingham did an appraisal of a seated Nayant pitcher which had some similarities to my cup. Nayant pottery



14

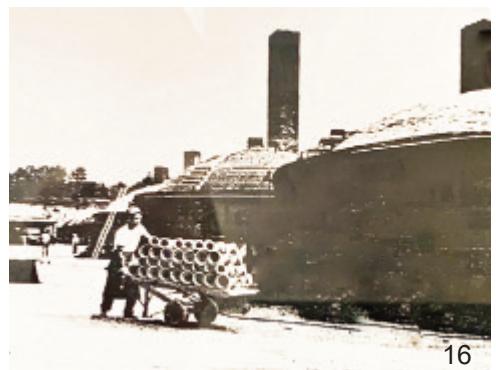
was made in Mexico from 200 BC to 200 AD. The expert was honest to state he bought a reproduction in Mexico which he believed to be authentic. The good news is I still like the cup and it is nice to know its history



15

Picture 15 is an 850 ML glazed sewer pipe mug impressed on both sides of the body with the words "*Pine Hall Vitrified De-Aired Sewer Pipe Winston Salem Ms.*" Theresa Bean passed on my request for information to Mr. Ted Corvey, Vice President for Sales and Marketing for Pine Hall Brick. Mr. Corvey kindly sent me the following information. The company was founded in 1922 making bricks. They started a sideline making pipe in 1928. The mug was made on a potter's wheel and fired in one of their beehive kilns using their clay shale (Picture 16).

You can see the original color of the clay shale on the unglazed bottom.



Large round kilns were distinctive of Pine Hall Brick's Plant #2.



17

Also, the marks where the mug was cut off the potter's wheel, and a hole in the center (Picture 17). The hole was necessary to aid the drying process and to prevent the very heavy mug (4 Lbs.) from blowing up in the kiln. After the mug was cooled a wood plug was inserted in the hole which still stops leakage to this day. Pine Hall Brick gave the mugs in the late 30's to municipal engineers and other officials to promote the De-Aired process which is achieved by a vacuum chamber in a brick making extruder machine.

Casters, muffineers, and dredgers all have pierced lids. The many openings on the lid are used to sprinkle sugar, spice, or pepper, on your food. The original ones were 5" to 8" high.

Picture 18 is 9" high 300 ML tankard with only 6 pierced holes on one side of the copper set on domed lid. The lid has bronze overlay. A chain attaches the lid to the handle. The tankard would hold a great quantity of sugar etc., and with so few holes, it seemed it was made for another purpose. The tankard has an iron handle which is riveted at



18

the top and soldered at the base. A bronze skirt around the top is decorated with an S pattern, seven small suns, and a triangular border above the copper body. The interior is tin lined which is a clue it was meant to hold liquid. Recently, I saw on an auction site a very similar copper Spanish Sangria Tankard circa 1800. Mystery solved One can assume the holes in the lid are made to allow the drink to breathe. Sangria is an alcoholic drink made with red wine, fruits, and occasionally other spirits. Spain and Portugal are the only nations legally allowed to name this beverage Sangria. No marks.

Lignum vitae (wood of life) is a very dense and heavy wood which grows as small, slow-growing trees in the Caribbean region. It is so named because the resin of the wood can be used for medical purposes. It is so dense it immediately sinks to the bottom if dropped in water. Because of its hardness it is ideal to make lawn bowling balls, police nightsticks, and bearings. The hardness of the material necessitates it is machined on a lathe.

Picture 19 shows two Lignum vitae goblets, unusually made by hand. The larger one is 400 ML (1½ Lbs.) and more crudely done than the smaller one 250 ML (3/4Lb.). The cut-out lines around the upper body are not straight and both goblets tilt to the side. The in-



19

terior of the larger goblet is roughly hewn out, the smaller goblet is better, but still has many scratches from the use of hand tools. The larger goblet wobbles if touched because the base is not flat. It was supposedly found in the back of a junk shop, covered in dust, where it had resided for many years. Maybe a true story, or just a good tale. I think these goblets might be of considerable age and I admire the many hours someone long ago spent to make them.



20

Picture 20 is a ½ L serpentine tankard which has vertical lines crossed with two horizontal slotted bands in the center. Two more slotted bands are around the top and base. The handle has a carved dragon with bared teeth which adds to the tankard's appeal. Varying shades of green are found on the body. Please see Ron Fox's article for more information on serpentine steins.

Picture 21 is a 250 ML hand forged stein. The finial and body are copper. The lid is bronze with an interior soldered ½" copper sleeve to marry the

hinge to the cover and ensure the cover fits nicely inside the stein. The handle, base rim, and the three feet are iron. The maker of this stein was a very competent blacksmith. One assumes this stein was made to sit in the fire to warm the beer in winter. Marks near the top of the body are "1916."



21



22

Picture 22 is a 675 ML stein with a set on lid. There are 28 stones on the body and 7 stones on the lid. The finial is in the shape of a flower. The entire stein and lid are overlaid with filigree. Filigree uses fine wires which are bent into an intricate pattern. The body is divided into four panels. Each panel has a central stone surrounded by six flowers. The same flowers are found around the finial on the lid. The handle has a cobra head on both ends. No marks, but it is probably from India.



23



24

Picture 23 is a 550 ML resin character stein of an acorn tree. Actual acorns and wood knots are embedded in the body. The tree is covered in green moss. Two labels are glued in windows on the body. The top label DOBRE PITI, DOBRE ZITI means good drinking, good living. The lower window has a Pilsner Urquell beer bottle label circa 1960-1970. The stein was made by placing a glass in the mold. The mold is then filled with resin and allowed to harden. Next the cover and handle are slotted to accept the wooden hinge which is pinned to the handle and glued to the cover (Picture 24). I contacted the Pilsner Urquell Brewery in the Czech Republic for further information. Ms. Anna Perinova kindly replied stating they have a large collection of drinking vessels but has never seen this stein before.

Over the years I have seen on eBay

the identical stein featuring different breweries, one for Radegast Beer, one for Staropramen Beer, one for Gambrius Beer, and one like mine for Pilsner Urquell Beer, and all beers from the Czech Republic. The maker of these steins is still unknown. A company from Austria makes a similar cup made with a glass covered in resin with a man's face on the body and wood knots embedded in the body. Their paper label reads *Hand Made in Austria* with a capital L in a circle attached to a second oblong circle. Possibly they made this stein.



25

Picture 25 is a handmade three handled terra cotta ½ L pass cup. Each handle has an incised monkey face in the center. The four arms emanating from the monkey's face and body look like snakeskin so we can consider the monkeys as mystical beasts. The monkey's eyes are very similar to eyes found on Cameroon pottery and statuary, so it is possible this cup was potted in Africa. No marks.



26

Picture 26 is a hand stitched 400 ML drinking flask which has a hand forged, riveted hook to accommodate a strap so it could be worn across the chest. Three times it was offered for sale on eBay, twice it was listed as a drinking flask and once as a powder horn. The entire flask is tooled with a diamond pattern, trees and lines, unfortunately not visible in this picture. One

would assume the material is leather; but actually, the flask is made from a camel's scrotum. Possibly not your first choice for a drinking vessel.



27

Picture 27 is a 625 ML Spanish Colonial Age (1492-1832) copper stein. The only decoration is multiple bumps made by a punch on the set-on lid which is chained to the handle. The body is hand forged in five pieces which are soldered together. Today one can do a professional job soldering with an electric gun. This stein, was made with a soldering tool having a large V shaped copper end which was heated in the fire. It is much harder to use a heated tool to solder, typically resulting in a much poorer finish. A support strap is soldered to the body to strengthen the handle which is riveted at the top and soldered at the base. The finial and bottom are also soldered. No marks.

Wishful thinking # 1. I purchased a 425 ML medieval gothic 14th century style cast bronze caudle cup, or mortar, with two small dragon handles weighing 3¾ lbs. with middle English wording on a band at the top of the body, "COVEL SERKE HEE YCHE GOTEN Ao 1376" (Picture 28). Both sides of the cup have a coat of arms held aloft by dragons. Above the arms there is a crown and a knight's helmet. The seller listed it as a tankard and thought it was not medieval. I think it is a caudle cup because mortars usually have a rounded interior to facilitate removing the ground up substance. If authentic, it would be very rare.



28

Research on medieval bronze castings yielded little. A.H. Wilkens Auctions, from Toronto has a great reputation. They recently held an appraisal day in Montreal. I met with Mr. Andrew Wilkens who kindly spent considerable time educating me on medieval objects. The cup is crudely cast and the coat of arms is not sharp. This would not be acceptable to a royal family. The bottom should have more signs of wear and there is no verdigris on the cup. Lesson learned and the knowledge is much appreciated.



29

Wistful thinking # 2, Indus Valley Pottery was made was made between 2500-1500 BC. One small beaker, Picture 29, with animal drawings on both sides , 3" high X 2" at the opening was listed as a repaired Indus Valley Beaker for a nominal sum. Due to their age most beakers you find have suffered breakage and are reglued. The potter's wheel was invented sometime around 5000 BC, so it is possible it was made using the wheel. Research revealed similar authentic beakers are handmade with a thick wall made without any grooves signifying it was not cut off from a potter's wheel while mine

is thin walled and made on a potter's wheel meaning it is probably a reproduction.



30

eBay listed a large wooden tankard made from a log with a $\frac{3}{4}$ " wall $6\frac{1}{2}$ " deep with a 6" opening at the top. The body and handle are hand carved from one piece of wood. The handle has a small hole to accommodate a cover pin. Worm holes are found on the body. Unfortunately, the cover was missing, and the bottom was broken. A tankard in this sorry state would make a good repair project. I decided to use only hand tools to make the bottom and cover to duplicate how it was originally made. Instead of a finial I made the cover overlap on one end like the large English silver tankards (Picture 30).

Recently someone listed a similar antique Norwegian folk art large wooden Acanthus Tankard elaborately carved with no cover, worm holes., and a damaged bottom (Picture 31).



31

Great Britain wanted to import from China silk, tea, and porcelain. China only wanted gold or silver in payment, not British goods. The British East India Company controlled all trade with India till the mid-18th century. Opium was grown and used for medicinal purposes, mainly pain relief by Indian doctors for centuries. Before the introduction of smoking tobacco, opium was taken orally mixed with juice because it was foul tasting. Unlike smoking opium, the results were milder, a

feeling of wellbeing, and increased energy. If abused, it could still be highly addictive. The East India Company began exporting opium to China in exchange for their coveted goods.



32



33

Pictures 32 and 33 show two Indian Opium water bowls. Picture 32 is a small 75 ML wooden opium water bowl, carved on both sides with a floral design. Above the flowers are carved vertical slots. The handle is a bird and the wooden spout on the opposite end is a carved snake whose tail encircles the base. A copper pipe in the snake's mouth acts as straw. Picture 33 is a larger, 175 ML, copper opium water bowl. The handle is a cobra snake. A design of flowers and vines, made with a punch decorate the body.



34

Picture 34 is a 350 ML stein. Wooden oak slats form the body which are held in place with two riveted copper bands. The handle is a carved nude male acrobat gripping a barrel with his hands. The thumb lift is a woman acrobat also nude with her elbows on the cover and her feet on a ball which sits on the male's neck. There is a partially legible stamped mark "France 1946."



35

Picture 35 shows a 600 ML handmade tankard weighting a hefty 3 lbs. A steel pipe was used for the body. One ring was bent and welded at the top of the pipe, a second ring at the base and a circular plate were welded to the make the bottom of the tankard. The next step shows the artistry of the welder. Bronze was heated by torch and brazed on the body in eleven large blobs and multiple small droplets, giving the tankard a unique look. Finally, two flat bars together were heated red hot, held in a vice, and twisted to make the handle which was then welded to the body. The work of a true craftsman. No marks.

The Maine Antique Digest, July 2006 published an article by Stephen Visakay titled *White Cloud Farms: The Curious Story of the Most Famous Unknown Art Pottery Company in America*. Anyone who has researched a piece in their collection can admire his determination to discover more about this pottery. For over 20 years, Stephen researched many pottery and pottery marks books, enlisted genealogy companies to find relatives and checked local libraries and town hall records. One book gave him a small nugget of information, the potter's mark was an apple. Finally he located a relative of the White Cloud Farms where he learned the story of the pottery (1920-1957).

Here is where the story gets interesting.

White Cloud produced many pieces of pottery but were most well known for a

small drinking cup with a nude woman draped over it, arms and legs spread wide open complete with a saucer. It soon became known as "The Bottoms Up Beaker." Her hairstyle denotes she is a flapper. You must drink all the contents because it will tip over unless you place the open end down. The Bacher family, immigrants from Germany, eventually located in Rock Tavern N.Y. where they also grew apples, hence the pottery mark. Their sons Will (designer) and Holland (potter) produced the flapper in 1928 in a matte green finish. Due to its popularity, they obtained a patent in 1929. The McKee Glass Company from Jeanette, Pennsylvania began producing glass flapper cups in a large scale which caught the attention of the authorities who thought the cups were scandalous. An agreement was reached where they could still make the cups, but the nude flapper had to close her legs. White Cloud farms, a much smaller operation, sued McKee Glass for patent infringement. A settlement was reached where McKee obtained the rights to their patent, #D 77,725, and stamped the number below the flapper's legs. But again, White Cloud could still make the flapper with closed legs in pottery. Many other potteries also made the flapper. Picture 36 a,b shows a pottery flapper which might or might not have been made by White Cloud Farm Pottery. No marks.



36a 36b

They have many names and date from as early as the seventeenth century: costrel (canteen), keg, barrel, the archaic English term rundlet, and the French term "tonnelet" because many examples originated in France. Essentially, they are earthenware pottery containers usually with ears (loops) through which a belt or a rope could be passed so a traveler or farmer could carry a drink to be enjoyed with lunch.



37

Picture 37 shows a bullet shaped hand potted costrel, mustard colored with an overlay of dark green and brown swirls. The shape allows it to sit on the flat end like today's water bottle. The Seattle Art Museum has a 17th c. costrel which has some similarities to this piece.



38

Picture 38 shows a Parian Ware costrel decorated with squiggly lines in the shape of flowers and ferns. Possibly made for a lady. No marks.



39

Picture 39 is a high gloss pottery flask with a mythological sea-witch rising from the seaweed. Sea witches controlled the oceans and could cause storms and decided whether or not sailors caught many fish. If you insulted them, they could conjure up rough

seas and sink your ship. She is not the mystical mermaid sailors dreamed of, but more like an evil crone who should be avoided. Possibly the depiction on the flask is to remind a sailor of the danger of intoxication. Martin Brothers made many grotesque pieces. Some were marked, others had a paper label. No marks, but maybe made by them.



40

Picture 40 shows a 550 ML unglazed brown pottery seal. It is 9" long with a funnel spout on the top. Possibly it was used as a ceremonial drinking cup. One museum I contacted thought its origins might be Peruvian dating from 800 BC. The gentleman who replied to my inquiry stressed this was not his area of expertise, so I am not identifying him or the museum. Online, I found a similar pottery fish vessel with a funnel spout which supposedly is also from Pre-Columbian Peru. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art has a shark with a similar funnel dating from 200 BC.

Papier-mache is the art of layering paper strips held in place with glue on an object. The craft originated in China around 200 AD. Kashmir, India still practices the art today where it is considered a luxury handicraft.

Picture 41 shows a 300 ML wooden tankard with a brass plated tin insert cup and a brass ring around the base. It is from Kashmir and is overlaid with papier-mache. The body is hand painted in a bright floral pattern in black, yellow, green, and red colors. It was purchased in the middle east from someone selling it to raise money to pay for a trip to Mecca.

Picture 42 shows a 275 ML wooden mug, again with a tin insert, also covered in papier-mache with a hand painted forest scene. Twenty animals are found on the body and 10 more on the handle. Rarely do these tankards come up for sale. Over the years four



41



43a



42

have been offered on eBay from Kashmir and one from China with an Asian scene. No marks.

Picture 43 a,b shows a 19th century massive 20" high pewter harvest jug with a gargoyle shaped spout. Seven medieval pictures are attached to the body. The empty weight is 12 1/4 lbs., full with beer or wine, it would weigh 44 lbs. A threaded filling plug on the top has a ring to hang it on a branch or a bracket. The handle is used to tilt the jug to pour a drink. A coat of arms for the Thielen family is engraved on the bottom. There are four marks on the handle, plus the number 1684 on the body under the spout. Peter R.G. Hornsby in his book *Pewter of the Western World 1600-1850* has a pic-



43b

ture # 851 of a similar 18th century wine can which is in the Historical Museum in Frankfort.

Our history is easily lost. Some of the data in this article comes from research mixed with conjecture. It would be most appreciated if anyone can supply further information.



Photos from the Road

Fifty-eighth installment

By Ron Fox
SCI Master Steinologist

I begin this segment back on the east coast at the home of Bob Horen. I can always count on being able to photograph many steins for this series. Bob's varied collection gives me much to choose from.

The top row begins with an enameled glass stein depicting two different fraternity students dueling with swords. Each wears their fraternal colors.

The next glass stein features a thirsty frog drinking from a stein. It doesn't look like he is leaving any for anyone else.

The top row ends with a double overlay of pink over white over clear. The front panel has a hand-painted scene of the town of Meissen.

The middle row starts with an opaline glass stein in light blue coloring. It is decorated with a dogwood floral scene on a faceted body. The fancy lid is made of silver.

Next is another opaline, but this one is an overlay of green over white. The floral decoration is in silver. It too has a fancy silver lid with a dog finial.

The middle row ends with an overlay stein of blue over white. It has a pasty enamel floral decoration on a faceted body. The matching glass inlay is set into a silver lid.

The bottom row begins with an amber blown glass stein. It has a very busy floral enamel decoration with matching glass inlay lid. Nice form.

Next is an overlay of aqua over white with facet cuts. The brass lid is very fancy, and what you cannot see from the photo, has a matching glass inlay set into it. A beauty.

The page ends with a tall slender glass stein. It has a very detailed gilded design on a faceted body. The matching faceted domed inlay lid is wonderful.





This page starts out with Poschinger glass stein with an enameled scene of a woman serving a pig dinner. This is believed to be a Hohlwein design.

The next glass stein is enameled with a large rooster. I can hear his morning call. This also is believed to be a Hohlwein design.

The top row ends with another enameled glass stein. This one features a scene of two well dressed birds getting ready for their marriage. Again, this is believed to be a Hohlwein design.



The middle row begins with a faceted glass stein. It has both a transparent and opaque enamel floral design. It has a matching glass inlay lid.

The next stein is made by Moser and of green glass. It is enameled with their recognizable daisy and fern design. It has a glass inlay lid.

The middle row ends with a very unusual glass stein. It has a series of twisted threads within the glass body. This internal decoration is called latticino.



The bottom row starts with a ruby colored glass stein. It has a faceted body and fancy stacked brass lid.

Next is a clear glass stein. It has a detailed wheel-cut scene of dwarfs in the forest drinking around a table. It has a glass inlay lid.

The last stein on this page is an overlay of ruby over clear. It has busy facet cuts and a fancy stacked brass lid. I have seen this stein in cobalt overlay as well.

Besides great glass, Bob's real specialty is Art Nouveau steins. He has hundreds in all materials. The top row begins with three steins designed by Leopold Moritz Karl Capeller for Reinhold Merkelbach. The first has a repeating series of T's and upside down U's. The second looks like a golf ball on a wide tee. The third also has a repeating pattern and all have unique shapes and striking orange-red coloring.



The middle row starts with another Reinhold Merkelbach stein designed by Capeller. It is easy to see the similar decoration, even though it is in blue instead of the orange-red coloring.

Next is a stein that was made by the Swedish firm of Rörstrand. It features a dominant floral design.

The middle row ends with a stein from Scharvogel and designed by Theodor Schmuz-Baudiss.



The bottom row begins with two more Scharvogel steins designed by Theodor Schmuz-Baudiss. It is easy to see their similar designs and blue color scheme.

The last stein on this page is made of stoneware in brown coloring. It was designed by Richard Reimerschmid, probably the most famous of all the Jugendstil artists. He not only designed steins, but all sorts of items for the home, as well as architecture.





The top row of this page has steins designed by Richard Riemerschmid. The first is a Mettlach in a green apple coloring. Next is another Mettlach in a brown-red coloring. Last is a pottery, with the same side swirl, but in an almost black coloring.



The middle row begins with another Richard Riemerschmid stein. It is also made by Mettlach and has an aqua colored glaze.

The middle of the page has a stein I have not seen before. It was made by Max von Heider. If you look at the spout design, you will see the similarity to von Heider's many steins. I really like the form of the open spout and placement of the pewter lid. The color is really striking as well.

The last stein in the middle row is one more Mettlach by Richard Riemerschmid. It is decorated in an aqua glaze with a tear drop pattern. Not a common stein.



Bob has many character steins. The bottom row starts with Bavaria. The lion was the mascot for Munich and he is always by her side.

Next is a very hard stein to find from the Reinhold Hanke factory. It is a mummy in his sarcophagus. The body of the stein is decorated like hieroglyphics with steins, students, dogs, etc. A very unique stein.

The last stein from Bob's collection depicts men playing the game of soccer. The lid is what catches your eye. It is a figural soccer ball with "Prosit" written across it. A fun stein.

These next two pages will cover unusual Mettlach items from various collections. I purposely chose shapes other than steins except one. It will show how wide their production was.

The top row begins with a green glazed vase with a red heart pattern. It is the only one I have seen.

Next is a beaker decorated in their experimental glazes. I have seen these in brown coloring, but not this cobalt.

The top row ends with an etched vase decorated in an Art Nouveau floral design.

The next row starts with a two handled pass cup. It is decorated with the Salvation Lamb. It is mold number #1931 and is 1 liter in size. So far it is a one of a kind.

This row ends with another rare Mettlach item. It is mold #1582 depicting an angel with wings.

The bottom row begins with a Mettlach Probe. A Probe is a Mettlach item that was made in different variations to decide which one would go into production. This stein is a color variation that was not chosen for production. It is probably a one of a kind.

Next is Mettlach #3359 Art Nouveau floral vase. Not many were produced.

The bottom row ends with a Parian pokal. It is six-sided and has a different scene on each panel. Mettlach started using these unglazed porcelain bodies back around 1840. They were taken out of production around 1860. I only know of three of this particular pokal.





The top row has two rare plaques. The first is mold number 1110 and is decorated in a glazed majolica style. The scene is of a nude woman and a horse. The border is decorated with cherubs and floral design. Not a common plaque.



The second plaque is a true chromolith item, mold #886. It is made with colored clays and then ground and polished. This was a time consuming process and was quickly replaced.



The middle row begins with another item having their experimental glaze design. It is a two handled vase, mold #2490 in a teal green coloring.

The middle row ends with another vase mold #1186. It is shell shaped with Neptune at the base.

The bottom row starts with an etched Art Nouveau floral vase. It is both beautiful and unusual.

Next is a tall 19 1/2" vase, mold #2387. It has an elaborately decorated scene of flowers in the print under glaze technique. The flowers are called Stargazer lily. I have never seen this vase before.

We end this page with another vase. It is mold #2613/5379 and has a delft-like canal scene in blue coloring. It is in the print under glaze technique.

In the September segment, I showed you a group of my favorite Crailsheim faience steins. On this page I will show you others that mean a lot to me. The first two rows are all from the Ansbach factory.

The first stein depicts a farmer wearing a hat sharpening his long handled sickle.

Next is a stein decorated with a woman in a long dress holding her rifle. Not someone I wish to meet in the forest.

The stein that ends the top row has a scene of a fox within a panel. The background has a sponged manganese design.



The middle row starts with a stein featuring a standing rooster within a panel. The background has a sponged manganese design.

The next stein is my most recent purchase. I was expecting it to be the usual 1 liter size. I was pleasantly surprised when I opened the box and it turned out to be a 1 1/2 liter size. The colorful hawk design added to my pleasure. It's a keeper.

The middle row ends with a stein decorated with another rooster. I have had it for many years and am still very fond of it.



The bottom row starts with an early stoneware stein from the Siegberg factory. It is designed with a double headed eagle and dated 1573. It also has the artist initials "LW", which have yet to be identified.

Next is another one of my more recent purchases. It is from the Bunzlau factory and dated 1698 within the applied body medallion. It is 1 1/2 liter in size with super pewter mounts.

The bottom row ends with a faience stein from the Berlin factory. It is another large size with great mounts.





The world has had a rough couple of years. The Covid virus has affected us all. I thought I would end this segment with steins that could bring a smile back to our faces. Laughing is great medicine.

The top row begins with an enameled glass Stein. It features a large black chicken with his head buried in an open beer Stein. I guess he likes beer too.

Next is a stoneware Stein with a scene of one man pouring into a funnel stuck into another man's head. If learning could only be that easy.

The top row ends with a hunter shooting at a rabbit, only he mistakenly is using his umbrella instead of his rifle.



The middle row starts with a one liter stoneware Stein. The scene is of a dachshund pulling a large radish.

Next is a Mettlach Stein designed by Heinrich Schlitt. The scene is of a Roman soldier at a guard house being saluted by an approaching officer, only he has his girlfriend hidden within the guard house.

The middle row ends with a comical scene of frogs jousting while riding grasshoppers.

How can this wide eyed pixie, that starts the bottom row, not bring a smile to your face?

Next Stein is a character cucumber with a face. This Stein has always made me think of the Wizard of Oz movie.

The bottom row ends with a drinker sitting in a large Stein. What a predicament.

This brings another installment to a close. Stay safe and well.



Really Big Steins - Part I

By Ronald E. Gray

Introduction

With the recent reemergence of a long-lost big Stein, combined with the rumor of an old 39-liter beer Stein, I thought it was time to revisit what is the world's largest Stein. Man has always been fascinated with the biggest, heaviest, largest, tallest, or fastest. Guinness, the Irish brewery, even keeps a record of them. Stein Collectors International has asked about the world's largest Stein from the very beginning, but articles, particularly articles of substance, have been sparse. I will discuss those articles and blurbs as we go along. I have somewhat arbitrarily selected five liters as being the cutoff for what is considered a big Stein. In my opinion, that is when they start to become too unwieldy to serve as a pouring pitcher. The five-liter limit also allows me to include at least one character Stein in the list. At five liters, a Stein itself weighs around ten pounds (about 4.55 kg). Five liters of beer will weigh about 11 pounds (five kg). For those that are wondering, beer is slightly denser than water, depending on its alcoholic content. Generally, it is about one percent heavier, so it is not that significant. At five liters, it is obvious that combination of size and weight make it awkward to use as a pouring pitcher. But people still ask if they really drank out of those things. Most manufacturers made some large Steins, but they were generally for display or bragging rights. As with any rule though, there are exceptions as you will see.

I scanned 225 past issues of **Prosit** for articles or mentions of Steins capable of holding five liters of beer or more. I only found about 40 instances where such a Stein was mentioned in our entire history. Most were just a sentence or two versus being an entire article about a big Stein. I was going to need to do an exhausted search of all the resource materials available to answer the many questions I had. I used the Internet, digital books on the Internet Archive (their source of digital books

are great for searching for specific terms, thus eliminating the need to read the entire book, magazine or article) and newspapers.com for articles in various newspapers. I did have to use the Interlibrary loan to get a book or two for my research. I even consulted the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine. The Wayback Machine? That machine allows you to review past web pages that otherwise would not be available. It does not have every past rendition of a website, but you would be surprised at what can be discovered. If you put anything on the web, make sure it is correct or else your error may be available for anyone to see in the future. The name of the machine is derived from my son's favorite cartoon, *Rocky and Bullwinkle*. One segment of the cartoon features an intelligent dog, Mr. Peabody, and his pet boy, Sherman, as they travel back in time.¹ Yes, you guessed it, it was called the Waybac Machine. The odd spelling was intended to give it favorable comparison to the UNIVAC and ENIAC computers.

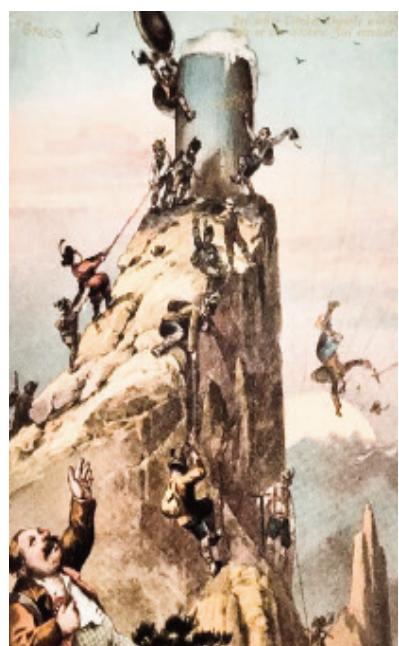
I have confined my search to just those drinking vessels having a lid (it can be detachable) and intended for sale to the public, particularly collectors and beer drinkers. That ruled out any Guinness world recordholders as Guinness is only concerned with bigness and that the Stein can hold beer.

There are three contenders for the title. All three have appeared in previous issues of **Prosit**, but we only got a glancing view with little discussion of one. I will discuss them in the order of size. None of them would be considered common and easily collectible by the average beer Stein collector. Each one had a little mystery that needed to be revealed to tell the story. Unfortunately, I could not solve every mystery and some questions remain. Perhaps a reader or two, particularly those in Europe, will be able to solve the remaining mysteries and enlighten the rest of us. When you see a sentence with a

question mark, make a note of it for use in your future searches to help increase our knowledge.

Part II in a future issue will discuss some of the also rans that are in the five liters or more category but not among the top three. This is intended for those Stein collectors that might want a big collection without having to collect a lot of Steins. Finally, I will close with a section on the pretenders. These are objects intended to be the biggest but would not be considered real beer Steins by Stein collectors, but they are fun to look at. I call them the oddities and monstrosities.

I think the circa 1900 German postcard shown in Picture 1 clearly illustrates how the Germans feel about their search for their Holy Grail – a giant beer Stein filled with beer. On the top of the card in yellow letters it simply says *Gruss* (Greetings), presumably for those able to reach the summit. The German verse says it all, *Der echte Trinker hiemals weicht, Bis er der höchste Zwei erricht* (The real drinker never gives way until he reaches the highest goal.).



Picture 1. The Holy Grail of Beer Steins Postcard.

My research did teach me that any claims, particularly those in newspapers, need to be taken with a large grain of salt.

Verification

The first thing we need to do is to independently verify the capacity of the beer stein. This is easy and fun to do with our 0.5 L and 1.0 L steins. All we need to do is fill one with a known quantity of our favorite beer. They are generally marked as to their capacity with the fill line clearly marked. If they are not marked, it is easy to calculate the capacity. The stein is usually cylindrical in shape. The volume of a cylinder is radius times height for its cubic volume. It is easier to measure the diameter and divide by two to get the radius. Remember to adjust your measurements for the thickness of the walls of the stein and allow some room for foam and pouring without the beer slopping over when poured.

Calculating the volume of the larger steins is a little more difficult. As the steins get taller, they begin to taper near the top. The reason they do this is for stability. It reduces the chances of the stein toppling, particularly when the lid is opened. This is the same reason ancient people were forced to build pyramids when they wanted to build tall structures. The shape of these steins is called a conical frustum shape and there is a formula for calculating its volume. I prepared a paper on how to do this calculation that appears in the Reading section of the SCI website.

J. W. Remy Mold 965, Three German Conquerors

The J. W. Remy mold at 20 L holds third place as the largest beer stein. It is not known when production of this stein ended. I do not have it in my collection, but I knew our Master Steinologist and J. W. Remy expert, Lyn Ayers, would have it in his collection. He provided the photograph shown in Picture 2. While his stein is missing the removable lid with a standing knight (see Picture 3), it does have a painted dedication that gives us a clue as to the age of the stein. The Beer Stein Library shows mold 965, limited-color edition,



Picture 2. JWR 965.



Picture 3. JWR Lid.

in its J. W. Remy catalog with the lid. The stein is also shown in the J. W. Remy old manufacturing catalog on the SCI website. The one shown in MySteinCollection.com is a repeat from the old manufacturing catalog. The verse on the stein is "*Deutsches Haus im Deutschen Land, schirm dich Gott mit starker Hand*" (German House in the German land, shield them God with a strong hand).

The conqueror on the front panel is

King Charles the Great or Charlemagne (747-814). The side panels are Friedrich Barbarossa (1122-1190) crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1155 and Rudolph of Hapsburg (1218-1291) elected King of the Romans in 1273. This stein is probably the hardest one to find.



Picture 4. Inscription.

The inscription around the top of Lyn's stein is mostly rubbed out (see Picture 4). We can make out that it was presented to John F. Trommer (1849-1897) of New York.² John F. Trommer was born in Hersfeld in what is now Germany. He immigrated to Portland, Maine in 1868 where he worked for a brewery. He then moved to Boston, working at several breweries before finally moving to Brooklyn, New York where he was brew master for William Ulmer Brewery. He bought Stehlin & Breitkopf, a two-year old brewery, in 1896 or 1897 (I could not verify the exact date as it was a private transaction). Stehlin & Breitkopf was only founded a few years earlier, but one of the co-founders wanted to sell the brewery after his son entered a freezer and got the chills that caused his sudden death. John did not have a chance to enjoy owning a brewery though as he died on May 2, 1897, after a short bout of influenza and pneumonia. His son George and wife Caroline took over operations of the brewery. They also had a hotel, restaurant and beer garden by the brewery. A younger son, John F. Trommer, Jr. committed suicide in 1907 by stabbing himself several times and turning on the gas, supposedly after being jilted. However, his brother George and his future father-in-law denied the rumor, stating it was just a spat and that John had suffered a nervous breakdown. In view of the method of suicide, the younger John must have been a very disturbed man.

It is not known as to which John the stein was inscribed to, but I suspect it may have been a gift from William Ulmer Brewery when John left to run his own brewery. John was highly respected and liked within the brewing industry.

**Matthias Girmscheid, mold X13,
“Germanen-Trauung”
(Teutonic Wedding)**

Our next challenger is truly a wedding stein as is proudly proclaimed in bold lettering near the top of the stein. We only got one glance of this stein and it was barely mentioned as “one of the world’s largest steins” in an article about the Bill Schwartz collection that appeared in the September 1969 issue of *Der Gemütlichkeit*, the predecessor to *Prosit*. Did “one of the world’s largest steins” mean it was tied with Gerz or were they conceding it was the second largest? The stein comes in a salt-glazed version and at least four full-color versions - dark blue back-



Picture 5. Harp Player Lid.

ground, bright blue background, chocolate background and white background. The current owner of *Töpferei* (Pottery) M. Girmscheid only produced the salt-glazed version and has now ceased production of it. The lid of the chocolate background version is shown in Picture 5.

The German verse around the lid is *Die alten Deutschen* (The old Germans). The German verse around the bottom of the stein is *Sie tranken noch eins ehe sie gingen* (They drank one more

before they left). Above the bride and groom is *Germanen-Trauung* (Teutonic Wedding). My searches seem to get more hits with *Germanische Trauung* (German Marriage per Google translation), so I am undecided as to the correct title to search.

After I had discovered the painting used for the Gerz 32-liter stein, I ran across the website run by Peter Willis, stein-man.de.³ I was surprised to see he had an old stein that he claimed held 39 liters. It was made by Matthias Girmscheid circa 1898 according to the site. It was hard to believe this stein was made about 100 years ago and we are only now finding out its size. The Beer Stein Library lists its size as 24 liters. Since we do not have any old Girmscheid catalogs, I presume the bottom of the stein was marked 24 L, a common practice. Does someone have the Girmscheid stein with the capacity marked on the bottom? The original manager of The Beer Stein Library did not provide photographs of the bottom marks or retain the name of the person providing the photographs. I asked Peter Willis to provide me with the stein’s critical measurements so I could



**Picture 6. Side-by-Side
the Two Largest Steins.**

verify the size of the stein. Peter Willis never responded to my request. I later learned he never had the stein in his shop, so he never saw a side-by-side comparison with the Gerz 32 L stein. Bob Hurley of the Meister Steiners chapter of SCI provided a side-by-side comparison of the two steins, Picture 6. While they may be about the same height with a lid, the Girmscheid stein is clearly shorter and narrower than the Gerz stein. Bob Hurley, John Lamb and Francesco Catanzaro (our newest member from Italy) provided me with measurements of their steins to enable me to verify the 24 L capacity for Girmscheid and the 32 L capacity for Gerz were both within reason allowing for foam and pouring beer without spilling any. John Lamb even filled his Girmscheid stein to the brim with just over 25 liters of water. John said he and his son had to do it twice as they lost count the first time. Maybe they were using beer the first time.

Peter Willis was having some personal problems and had to close his business to take care of his mother just before the Covid-19 pandemic hit us. The website is still listed as being down for maintenance, but you can use the Wayback Machine to see the old web pages.³

I found another listing for this same stein at the Schnitzelhaus in Tampa. The description of the stein was identical to that at the stein-man.de website. Since the restaurant owner was from Germany, I figured he bought the stein from Peter Willis. The restaurant has since closed and I could never locate the owner to ask him some questions about the stein, like did he ever fill it up to verify it held 39 liters? You can still view the web page for this stein via the Wayback Machine.⁴

After examining numerous photographs of the Girmscheid stein, I concluded that they were all the same height and capacity. There was no 39-L stein. If there was, it would have to be taller and/or wider than the 24-L version. Francesco Catanzaro, our newest Italian member of SCI, was told by both Peter Willis and the wife of the owner of the Girmscheid pottery that the stein

had a capacity of 39 L. While I could never get anyone at Girmscheid to admit saying that, I did get the owner of Girmscheid to admit that they did not have the world's largest beer stein, just the world's largest salt-glazed beer stein. Girmscheid pottery does not know the capacity of the stein. The capacity listed at The Beer Stein Library seems to be reasonable.

Steve Smith would have been proud of this old German; he is not wearing one of those silly helmets with wings or horns sticking out that he so detested and ridiculed. Some say it is Siegfried, but Siegfried is a legend, and this wedding is not elaborate enough for such a famous legend. I discovered the scene was based on a painting by Ferdinand Leeke (1859-1923). I was unable to find the original painting, but I managed to find a wood cutting that



Picture 7. Wood Cutting from Painting for use in Schoenfeld's Book.



Picture 8. Postcard of Float at 1900th Anniversary of Hermann's Victory at Teutoburg.

was done from the original painting. Professor Herman Schoenfeld of George Washington University wrote a book entitled *Women of the Teutonic Nations* in 1907.⁵ The publisher commissioned someone to do a wood cutting after the painting of Ferdinand Leeke for publication in Schoenfeld's book. The wood cutting was entitled A Teutonic Alliance and was copyrighted in March 1907.⁶ I am still puzzled as to how you can copyright a copy of another person's work. I found a picture of the work at The Project Gutenberg eBook, see Picture 7. The central scene on the stein is right from the painting. The two side scenes were altered slightly. The man standing on the left is now sitting at a table with a mug of mead. The scene on the right has been altered to look like a kitchen. One of the pots has the initials "KB" for Karl Beuler.

I suspected that the artist had a particular person in mind, but I needed more confirmation. Then I found this postcard, Picture 8, of a pageant at Detmold celebrating the Battle of Teutoburg Forest. I found two postcards, one dated 1909, the 1900th anniversary of the event, and one dated 1939. The scene on the postcards is the same and appears to be more like a painting or drawing than a photograph. Look at how similar it is to the Leeke painting. This could only be one person, Hermann the German or the wedding of Arminius and Thusnelda.⁷ The raised sword in Leeke painting is just like the raised sword on the Hermann the German monument. I view this as a link to my theory that Leeke intended it to be a painting of Hermann.

Not much is known about this early German hero as the early German tribes did not have a written lan-

guage. For a super race, they were slow to develop. His story would have been remembered in song and verse handed down orally, but we know how that can be distorted over the years. Hermann, not his real German name, was taken by the Romans at an early age and learned Latin and war tactics while serving in their legions. He was given Rome citizenship and a Roman name, Arminius (18-17 B.C.-A.D. 21). Arminius had earned the respect and trust of the Roman legions, but he did not forget his German roots. His father, Siegmund or Sigmer, was a prince of the Cheruscan tribe. Arminius tricked the Roman general Varus into a trap in the Teutoburg Forest where several German tribes were able to slaughter three Roman legions, about 20,000 soldiers. While the Romans conquered Gaul to the west of the Rhine River, they were never able to conquer the German tribes to the east of the Rhine River. We only know of Arminius due to the Roman historians' mention of him in their history books. Tacitus mentions Arminius in his books *Germania* and *Annals*. It is said that Martin Luther was the one that tagged him with the name Hermann.⁸ The various German kingdoms and dukedoms were seeking heroes to unite the German people in 1840 when they proposed a monument to Hermann. They selected Detmold, Germany which was thought to be near the battle site. By the time the monument was completed in 1875, winged helmets were an established prop in the operas. To be a true superhero, they felt a need to put one on Hermann's head. If you do not want to go to Detmold, Germany to see the Hermann the German monument, a smaller version can be viewed at New Ulm, MN. A British amateur archeologist found the actual battle site 100 kilometers northwest of there in the late 20th Century. The annihilation of three Roman legions is considered one of the most significant battles in the history of the world. If you want to learn more about the battle, I recommend *The Battle That Stopped Rome*⁹ or the YouTube video presentation by John Rhys-Davies.¹⁰

Some scholars see so many similarities in the life of Hermann and

Siegfried, that they believe the legend of Siegfried is based on the life of Hermann. Hermann's German name would have been a variation of his father's name, which could have been close to being Siegfried. Siegfried slayed a dragon, but Hermann slayed three Roman legions. Both died at the hands of their relatives, and both lost their sons. Then there is the way they both acquired their wives, by force of elopement. Thusnelda's father had promised her to another person to establish an alliance with another tribe. He was so furious about the elopement that he later gave Thusnelda and her son to Rome. The son was raised as a gladiator and died an early death.

Ferdinand Leeke was best known for his Wagnerian opera paintings. Around 1889, Richard Wagner's son commissioned Leeke to paint scenes from ten of Wagner's operas.¹¹ The winged or horned helmets were a must for the operas by that time. If you have a stein



Picture 9. Marzi & Remy Mold 65.



Picture 10. Two Postcards of Leeke's Paintings.
Two Versions Of Siegfried with the Three Maidens.

with a German (the man is not a Viking) sprouting wings or horns from his helmet, it might be based on a painting by Ferdinand Leeke. I have a Marzi & Remy black-handled relief stein, mold 65, showing Siegfried with three Rhine maidens, Picture 9. The scene is from the opera *Götterdämmerung* (Twilight of the Gods). Woglinde, Wellgunde, and Flosshilde are warning Siegfried of his impending death. This is another one of those paintings where the artist could not resist painting variations. I found two postcards, Picture 10, of Leeke's three Rhine Maidens paintings showing Siegfried on opposite sides of the pool of water. Who can blame him for wanting to sneak another peek at the three Rhine Maidens?

If you want to learn more about the winged helmets go to steveonsteins.com and search for Hermann the German or read Steve Smith's article that appeared on page 2430 of the September 2008 issue of *Prosit*. Steve's son is keeping his father's website going in his memory.

While I could not find any articles on the Girmscheid stein, other than that shown on stein-man.de, I did find three old photographs of the stein that proved interesting. All three photo-

graphs appeared on ebay, so I acquired them for my collection.

The first photograph is a Paramount Pictures publicity photograph of actress Mary Brian sitting on a table with the Girmscheid stein, Picture 11, with a white background. The caption on



Picture 11. Mary Brian with Best Prop for 1926.

the back of the photograph is “180 YEARS BEFORE HER TIME – Mary Brian, featured in Paramount film productions, beside one of the two largest steins in the world. This one, which was made in Germany 200 years ago, was recently brought to this country by the studio for a recent picture.” We know the stein is not 200 years old, but it does tell us she is 20 years old. Mary was born in 1906, so she would have been 20 years old in 1926. She was still under contract to Paramount at that time and was starring with Raymond Griffith in *A Regular Fellow* (originally called *He's a Prince*). The prince of a European principality would rather pursue Mary than be the prince or king. It is the perfect picture to feature a large stein. Unfortunately, this is one of the old silent films that were lost so I could not verify it appeared in the film. The Academy Awards did not begin until 1929 and there is not a category for best prop, but this stein would have been a sure winner if there was such a category back then. Another newspaper article stated the stein came from a German castle.¹²

Mary Brian was 62 inches tall. Her upper body would be about 29 inches, which is just under the 33½ inch height of the body of the Girmscheid 24-liter stein, so I would judge this stein to fit the measurements of the 24-liter stein. In addition, the height to width ratio is approximately 4:1.

The second photograph shown in Pic-



Picture 12. Hellmuth Falk Tipping His Stein.

ture 12, dated January 4, 1953, shows a man with the Girmscheid 24-liter stein. The caption accompanying the photograph states, “BIG DRINK: Hellmuth K. Falk of Milwaukee, Wis., gets an assist from Ms. Henry Kuelhorn as he reaches for a drink from an oversized stein which he owns. He recently returned from Germany where he recovered the stein from a friend with whom he had left it 27 years ago while attending the University of Berlin. The stein stands four feet high and holds eight gallons of beer. Its decoration represents an ancient wedding party. Donner, the thunder king, sits atop the lid. Falk says the stein is worth \$150 (\$1,456 in 2020).”¹³ A 24-liter stein is equivalent to 6.3 gallons, a 30.3-liter stein would be required for 8 gallons. Mr. Falk was editor of “Deutsche Zeitung” of Milwaukee. Did Mr. Falk deduce the 8-gallon capacity from the Gerz 32-liter stein capacity of 8½ gallons or did Girmscheid tell him the capacity was 8 gallons when they sold him the stein in 1926? Did you note that Mr. Falk bought his stein about the time Mary Brian was posing with the stein that appeared in her movie? Was this stein a popular item in the Roaring Twenties? If the Nordic gods did play musical instruments, I would think Donner’s instrument would be the kettle drum. Did the political situation in Germany and economic turmoil after the Great War cause Hellmuth (he did spell his name with a double “l”) and his parents to come to Milwaukee? Why did he leave his big stein in Germany? Hellmuth was extremely lucky that the stein survived the war and that his friend ended up in the right zone of Berlin after the war.

A second photograph. Picture 13 of Mr. Falk with his stein states it is “carved with illustrations of the legendary American giant Paul Bunyan.”¹⁴ The man on the stein neither looks like a lumber-



Picture 13. Falk Showing His Stein.

jack nor a giant. Did Falk feel a need to adopt the tale on his stein to better fit in with his adoptive country. I guess a tall stein deserves a tall tale.

I asked Ron Heiligenstein if he had heard of Hellmuth Falk. Ron remembered seeing this stein on display at The Milwaukee Club. The Falk family is well-known in Milwaukee. Franz Falk immigrated to Cincinnati in 1848 and then settled in Milwaukee where he started a brewery. Two of his sons became industrialists. Herman started The Falk Company which made gears. Otto joined the Wisconsin National Guard where he attained the rank of brigadier general. Otto later became the president and chairman of the board of Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Co. Ron Heiligenstein said he and Judy bought the Herman Falk summer home on the Milwaukee River. Ron even has some newspaper articles about a party that Falk hosted in which Charles Lindbergh attended. Lucky Lindy had jumped off the boat house roof into the river without breaking his neck. Two of us at Arizona Stein Collectors were not so lucky, as we broke our necks in separate accidents. At least two of us can now claim to have our heads screwed on right. Hellmuth could be a cousin of the industrialist Falk family, but he is not descended from Franz Falk.



Picture 14. Mina Kolb with Stein.

In October 1955, the Chicago Tribune¹⁵ featured a photograph, Picture 14, of Mina Kolb, a local TV personality and actress, with what appears to be the Girmscheid 24-liter stein (it seemed to have the same 4:1 height-to-width ratio). While the stein was on a pedestal, it was still shorter than Mina (assuming she was of average height), so I judged the height to be four feet high. The caption said it had a 40-quart capacity (10 gallons) or just under 39 liters. This is the earliest reference I could find to the 39-liter capacity. The stein was on display at the annual Chicago Antiques and Hobby fair in the Hilton Hotel. This stein may have the chocolate background versus the dark blue background on the Falk stein.

I decided to consult the William Schwartz auction catalogs to see what it had to say about the size of these two steins. The Gerz stein sold in lot 1 on April 4, 1998 for \$220. There were some issues with the stein and the lid was a dome shape, shorter than the naked child playing a harp. The stein was marked made in the French Zone 1952. It also showed the number 1540, which may have been the mold number. The Girmscheid stein sold in lot 406 on April 24, 1999 for \$675. I was quite surprised to see both were listed as 40 liters. William Schwartz was known for collecting steins, not for researching or writing about them.



Picture 15. Gerz 32 L Domex Catalog.

There was just one article in *Prosit* about Bill Schwartz, and he did not write it. In addition, the steins were sold by a local auction house rather than one of the auction houses specializing in beer steins. The Schwartz collection was sold in five auctions and consisted of 2,697 lots. While some lots included multiple steins, that still does not account for the more than 4,000 steins he was supposed to have in his collection according to the *Prosit* article.

Flemish Kermess (Flemish Church Festival) by Gerz, mold 1540.

This is the stein, Picture 15, that has long been recognized as the largest beer stein by stein collectors. The Gerz 32 L stein does not appear in The Beer Stein Library or MySteinCollection.com even though it is the one that is most often seen and has appeared several

times in *Prosit*. However, it is the one that also has been long misidentified with the source of the painting shown on the body of the stein. After my article disclosing the true painting that was the source of the scene on the Gerz stein, I ran across the website of Peter



Picture 16. Waldorf Astoria 32 L Stein Circa 1960.

Willis, stein-man.de.³ I was glad to see he was touting the correct version of the painting, but he did not mention my article in *Prosit* or on the SCI website. He replied that he knew it all along as he worked at Gerz as a painter. Apparently, he was the only Gerz worker that did not talk to Roland Henschen. Also, why did he not tell Gerz that they had the wrong information in their catalog? The stein-man.de website has been down for maintenance for over a year, but the pertinent page can be reached through the Wayback Machine.³

The earliest mention I could find of this being the world's largest stein and identifying the scene depicted was at the Waldorf-Astoria in 1960, Picture 16. The restaurant had just been remodeled as a German Rathskeller and featured the Gerz stein sitting on a platform. I found a press photograph from the U.S. Brewers Association showing its president, Edward V. Lahey, standing next to the stein. The plaque underneath the stein cited the origination of the name Waldorf and

stated the stein was the world's largest at 32 liters made in a small town on the Rhine River. Höhr-Grenzhausen is near the Rhine River, but not on it. Sessenbach, the new home of Gerz is further north and east of the Rhine River. It was said to depict scenes from *Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg*. That was a complete surprise and I bet not many members ever heard that story. This was five years before the founding of SCI. The photograph and story appeared in several newspapers around the country. Fortunately, the story did not gain traction, but it was not replaced by the truth.

This stein was first mentioned in the September 1966 issue of *Prosit* as a large stein holding eight gallons and being 50 inches tall in the Blatz Brewery collection. The measurements were a little off, but more importantly, it did not mention the maker, or the scene depicted on the stein. In the June 1967 issue of *Prosit*, George Autenreith responded that he had a stein that was 44 inches tall and held 8 ½ gallons that was supposed to be the world's largest stein. The stein did not have a mark and he did not identify the maker or the scene.

Here we should mention that this stein did come with at least three detachable lids. The King Gambrinus straddling a barrel of beer lid gives the stein a height of about 48 inches. The naked child playing a harp lid gives the stein a



Picture 17. Yuengling lid.

height of about 43 inches. The child is sometimes referred to as a cherub, but like the Clarence, the angel in my favorite movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*, he has not earned his wings and thus is

not a cherub. There is also a round domed lid which gives it a height of about 43 inches. The capacity of the stein remains the same for all three lids. A special lid was made for the 175th anniversary of D.G. Yuengling & Son, Inc. brewery in Pottsville, PA in 2004. It is America's oldest brewery. The lid features the Yuengling eagle, Picture 17. Around the top rim of the 32-L stein is painted in gold with "YUENGLING 1829-2004 175 YEARS." Only four were made. Since the stein is the same color scheme used by Gerz, I suspect that the steins were in inventory from the Gerz bankruptcy and Domex had the lids made in China. Domex also made an 8-L stein for them which says "175th Anniversary" in the center of the body and has nine raised ovals around the bottom of the stein. Three of the ovals feature an eagle and the remaining six ovals feature the Yuengling family members that have run the brewery during those years. There is a website for the Yuengling jugs, mugs and steins.¹⁶

The verse around the top of the stein says it all, *WER DIESEN HUMPFEN LEEREN KANN IST FÜR WAHR EIN GANZER MANN* (He who can empty this tankard is truly a man). Around the base of the stein are various symbols of drinking and drunkenness and the verse *SOLCHE KÜNDEN NACH FROHVER LEBTEN STUNDEN ERSCHEINEN* (Customers appear as such after happily spent hours), referring to how they will look after drinking the contents of the stein.

Montag Steins & Clocks GmbH in St. Goar, Germany on the Rhine River features a big collection of steins. The Gerz 32-L steins were normally featured in his showroom window along with a sign saying they held 35 liters. That is incorrect and Herr Montag has acknowledged that the correct capacity is 32 liters. The Gerz firm made their 32-L stein in full color with a yellow or cream background. When Zöller & Born took over production of the 32-L stein, they did full color steins in darker colors on a black or rust background. Herr Montag ordered a few of the new Zöller & Born 32-L steins in black with gold and silver or in blue and gray.



Picture 18. Gerz 32 L with Pewter Lid.

Victor Mader of Mader's Restaurant claimed he had the largest stein with an attached pewter lid that gave it a height of 53 ½ inches in the September 1967 issue of *Prosit*. It may have been the tallest, but it was still a tie for largest at 32 liters. This stein later appeared in a Ron Fox auction in 2011, Picture 18. It must have grown because it was listed as 57 inches tall. Ron Fox speculated that the pewter work might have been done by the Mettlach factory due to the craftsmanship and the fact that the pewter on the bottom contained inlays from Mettlach form 1395, "French Cards." A music box is hidden in the lid. If you dare to lift this lid open, make sure you are holding the stein tightly as it will be top heavy.

Another member had an ad that matched the Autenreith stein and listed the stein as 32 liters. There was hope that the Blatz Brewery stein would be identified at the 1968 SCI convention.

I found an ad for Shillito's Department store in Cincinnati¹⁷ inviting the public to watch Karl Lill of Sessenbach, Ger-



Picture 19. Shillito's Ad.

many paint steins, Picture 19. The article mentioned his workbench held "the world's largest beer stein, 8½ gallons, 45 lbs (20.4 kg), with design based on the hearty "Flemish Country Wedding" by Pieter Brueghel the Elder." However, that is not the stein shown in the picture. This is further proof that Gerz was touting this story and was the source for Roland Henschens article in September 25, 1971 issue of Tri-State Trader. Roland liked to visit Germany and talk to the potters. Gerz said it "was modeled by the well-known modeler A.J.G. – A.J. Garz in 1820."

I could not find any information on a modeler named A. J. Garz. One of the founders of Rosskopf and Gerz had the same initials, Alois Jacob Gerz. Was this just a misspelling or another spelling of the Gerz name? My original Thewalt article disclosing the real painting that was the source of the scene on the Gerz stein that appeared on the SCI website and then in *Prosit* was incorrect in blaming Roland Henschens as the source of the misinformation. His article did help popularize it though. I try to pass along the correct story whenever I see it still being misidentified, but it is hard to get people to accept the correction even though I provide them with a link to the correct painting. One ebay lister did change his listing, but when he relisted it, he stated that there was a difference of opinion as to the source of the scene. I told him there was no difference of opinion, it was fact versus fiction. He sent me a copy of a Gerz catalog (which I estimated to be from

the 1960s based on the clothing of a girl standing by the stein). István Szemeré, an SCI member from Hungary provided me with catalogs of Domex and Zöller & Born showing the Gerz stein with the incorrect story. With the many changes in ownership since the founder's death in 1893 and the two sales of the 32 L mold, it is easy to see how an oral history could change over the years. Politicians are well acquainted with the concept of continually repeating lies to get people to believe them. Due to the retirement of the employee responsible for firing the 32-L stein, Zöller & Born has discontinued making the stein. Some dealers claimed only one out of ten of these steins made it to painting, but that seems to be an unacceptably high rejection rate.

The next article on this stein appeared in the September 1971 issue of *Prosit* entitled *The Biggies*. The only thing new about the Gerz stein was that it now weighed 46 pounds (20.9 kg). More extensive coverage was given to Mettlach form 1161, a seven-liter etched pouring pitcher named "Serving Women and German Coat of Arms."

Dezso Ladanyl had an interesting tale about this stein in the September 1981 issue of *Prosit*. On a visit to Lucerne, Switzerland, he stopped in a souvenir shop and saw the world's largest stein. The shop owner told him that only one was ever made, but the eager Dezso declined when the quoted price was too high. He did purchase a ten-liter version of the stein. When he reached Oberammergau, Germany he again encountered the same huge stein. The shop keeper gave him the same spiel, but when he learned the price was about half the price of the one in Lucerne, he bought it and had it shipped home. He soon learned of a third and fourth copy of the stein and contemplated buying them for destruction so his would be more valuable. Judging by my searches, he was not successful.

Ken Armke of Opa's Haus of New Braunfels, TX had the definitive statement on this huge stein in the March 1982 issue of *Prosit*. He listed it at 32

liters, 46.8 inches (119 cm) tall and 35.3 pounds (16 kg). Ken said an unnamed stein authority was challenging the 1820 date, but that was the date in the Gerz records. The Gerz stein was for sale at the *Opa's Haus* and the editor of *Prosit* encouraged readers to buy it before Dezso Ladanyl got to it so he could destroy it to ensure he had the only copy.

The September 1982 issue of *Prosit* contained an article on an arts and craft version of the stein purchased from the White Horse Mold Shop in Trenton, NJ (no longer in business). Norbert Duch said his wife bought the stein to paint for him. She gave him the choice of regular lead-free or collector finish in pearl paints that would only be for display. He opted for the later. The stein was 25 inches tall, with the lid adding an additional 10 inches. This figural lid featured a couple different from the couple shown on the body of the stein. I think the mold shop had a mold made from the original stein so they could sell it to be hand painted. Did the firm have the permission of the Gerz firm? The stein periodically shows up on ebay. Some people got so carried away with the wedding story that they painted the woman's dress white. One ebay seller even referred to the couple on the lid as the proud parents of the bride.



Picture 20. 79" Stein?

The March 1985 issue of *Prosit* shows a German representative of the Nuremberg beer fair holding the world's largest beer stein. I found several photographs, see Picture 20, of

this one in newspapers.com.¹⁸ It states the stein is 79 inches high. Based on the man holding the stein just below his waist, he would have to be about eight-feet tall. The **Prosit** article does not list the author, but the author did feel it was necessary to disclaim any responsibility for errors in the newspaper article. The December 2002 **Prosit** has a photograph of David Harr holding the 32-L Gerz stein at his waist. While he is big in pewter repairs, we know he is not eight-feet tall.

The next encounter of the Gerz stein appeared in the March 1990 issue of **Prosit** discussing the Robert Ripley stein collection. His collection was sold in an auction when he died in 1949. There is a photograph of Mr. Ripley trying to drink from the Gerz stein, which is described as 50 inches tall. Was that with or without the lid? Some of the steins, including the Gerz 32 liter, were bought by Pabst Brewing Company.



Picture 21. Wrong Lid.

The September 1991 **Prosit** featured an article on Sam May and his gift shop just east of Lancaster, PA. His favorite stein was the Gerz 32 liter, but nothing new appeared in the article. We did learn he had passed on buying a case of the original Bud Man stein for \$5 per stein because he did not think they would sell. Hindsight is everything!

The March 2008 issue of **Prosit** showed some of the steins in the Blatz Brewing Company (acquired by Pabst Brewing in 1958) collection. One of the steins was the 32-liter Gerz stein purchased from Robert Ripley. The only problem was that it had the wrong lid, Picture 21. The one shown in the article is the lid that goes on the Girmscheid stein. The stein can also be seen in the 28 November 2001 issue of Ceramics Monthly, Vol. 49, Issue 9.¹⁹ The wrong-lidded stein can also be seen in the March 2008 issue of **Prosit**. Edward Meyer, Vice President of Exhibitions and Archives for Ripley Entertainment reacquired the stein in a Sotheby's online auction along with over 100 steins. The stein was thought to be the world's largest at a height of 37½ inches (without the lid), a 34-quart capacity (8½ gallons) and weighing 40 pounds. Many of the steins in the Pabst auction were previously owned by Ripley, but that was not mentioned in the auction catalog. The employees celebrated the event by filling the Gerz stein with beer "as a communal pouring jug." I would like to see a video of that as the filled stein would weigh over 100 pounds. I hated to bring rain on their triumph, but I felt a need to inform Ripley's and Edward Meyer that their stein had the wrong lid. I did not get a response to my e-mails. I guess ignorance really is bliss. Is there a Girm-



Picture 22. Two-man Job.

scheid 24-L stein with a Gerz lid?

Ripley's employees were not the only ones to use the stein for its intended purpose. I found a photograph of two gentlemen at a Frankfurt trade exhibition in 1966 demonstrating how to drink from the stein. It is obvious from the way it is being held that it is empty, otherwise the man standing by the mouth of the stein would have beer gushing out at him. The caption said the stein held 34 quarts (8½ gallons) and would weigh close to 150 pounds. Since 32 liters of beer would weigh about 70 pounds, the stein would have to weigh about 80 pounds, double the weight reported by others!

At the Stoudt's Beer Festival held annually in Adamstown, PA, they bring out their 32-liter Gerz stein for anyone wanting a big drink of beer. The July 11, 1993 Lancaster, PA newspaper shows the owner holding the stein while the brewery manager is having a few gulps of their favorite brew, Picture 22. Yes, it is true, there are exceptions to every rule.

I found a photograph of George Kash of Toronto, Ontario, Canada holding his 32-L Gerz stein while entertaining an Oktoberfest audience, Picture 23.



Picture 23. George Kash with Two Steins.

He may have found a new use for the stein – weight training for a stein holding contest, “*Masskrugstemmen*” to Bavarians. This is an endurance contest to see who can hold a one-liter glass of beer straight out from their bodies the longest. It is the safer and saner alternative to the chug-a-lug and beer pong contests of yore. Samuel Adams beer holds an Oktoberfest event each year in which they sponsor such contests. They also sell an annual Sam Adams Oktoberfest stein. Their advertising displays also feature a three-foot display stein, but do not be fooled by it. It is a fake stein, made of resin rather than earthenware and the lid does not open. Nevertheless, they sell them on ebay for about \$200.

George Kash told me his Gerz stein held 39 liters. He is not alone in thinking the stein is bigger than it is. A German beer retailer, who refers to himself as the Beer King, claims his stein holds 38 liters and he wants to claim the Guinness Book of World Record titles. Good luck on that. He did make it into the Guinness Book of Records for having the most labels of beer in his store for Germany. I feel I am fighting a losing battle on the capacity of these beer steins.

The World Wide Web had its beginnings in 1989/90. As more information was added to the Internet, it became a valuable source of information. It became easy to do research as it was right there at your fingertips. I was using it more and more to find out information about my steins. I was not satisfied with knowing the name of the artist that painted the original scene that appeared on my stein. I wanted to see the painting. The next mention of the Gerz 32-liter stein appeared in my on-line article on Thewalt on the SCI website in the Reading section. I had

discovered the original painting around 2008-9. This article later appeared in the September and December 2010 issues of *Prosit*.

When I heard about the Flemish Wedding painting, I had to see it. My searches for “Flemish Wedding” did not turn up anything close to the scene. I switched tactics and began searching for paintings by Pieter Brueghel the elder. It was obvious after looking at a few of his paintings that his style did

(157 x 221 cm). Since I am never going to get there to see it, I found a postcard showing the painting, Picture 24.

If you draw a diagonal through the painting, you will note the left side is darker, forcing you to view the lighter side as the couple approaches the *kermess* (church).

The Web Gallery of Art speculates that the couple may be the artist and his wife and that the manor in the background

may be the one they rented for several years before purchasing it in 1662. I sent an e-mail requesting the basis for their speculation, but I did not receive a reply. I did find a biography published in 1907 in *Masters in Art*²² that indicated that Teniers sometimes included himself in his paintings.

The articles I cited did seem to agree on one thing, the stein holds 32 liters

(8.45 gallons, almost 34 quarts). It may be that there are some of the steins where the capacity was marked on the bottom of the stein. There was more of a variance in the height of the stein. The claim of 79 inches was no doubt an error and can be disregarded. We do know the lids will make a difference in the height, but they do not add anything to the capacity of the stein. The pewter lid is an after-market addition that makes it more difficult and awkward to use as a pouring pitcher. There also can be some shrinkage in the height during firing. The King Gambrius lid should have a height of around 48 inches (122 cm) and the child playing the harp should have a height of around 43 inches (109 cm). The variation in the weights is more puzzling. Weight may vary by altitude, but not enough to account for the wide variation shown. The claim of 150 pounds when filled is a grossly overstated and should be ignored. Fortunately, this



Picture 24. Flemish Kermess Postcard.

not match that of the scene on the stein. I decided to change tactics again and started googling a prominent feature on the stein, the bagpipe player. This led me to a bagpipe band that had a web site featuring paintings of bagpipe players.²⁰ Alas, a painting matching the scene on the stein was not listed among the site's paintings. But I took the chance that Aron Garceau, who ran the website, knew more about bagpipe paintings than I did and sent him a photograph of the scene I was trying to match. While he did not recognize the painting, he did think it looked like the work of David Teniers the Younger (1610-1690). Once I searched on that name, I soon found the painting, *Flemish Kermess* (Flemish Church Festival)²¹ painted in 1652. My Pied Piper had come through for me. The painting can be viewed at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium in Brussels. Befitting a big stein, the painting itself is big, 61.8 x 87 inches

has little bearing on the task at hand, emptying the stein. Based on the only weight given for the Girmscheid stein, a weight of around 40 pounds seems to be more likely to be the correct weight.

Only a few questions remain about this stein. Who is A. J. Garz? Who produced the first stein around 1820? Were the original steins salt-glazed steins, thus challenging the Girmscheid stein's claim? Perhaps one of our readers will be able to solve the remaining questions.

Bigger But Not Commercial

Dümller & Breiden 2.1-meter Schaukanne (Exhibition Jug)

Most of us learned about the Dümller & Breiden stein when they published their 100th Anniversary catalog in 1983 which included a photograph of the employees surrounding this giant jug. The photograph was dated October 25, 1893. It was said to be displayed in the reception hall of one of the world's largest breweries in the United States. In the June 1983 *Prosit*, Werner Sahm offered to give a crystal "Star-Base" Rastal stein to the first person to locate the stein. Werner Sahm indicated the jug was sold to a Chicago area brewery. Most of us were not aware that this stein or jug had previously been spotted by an SCI member and almost purchased by him. In the December 1967 issue of our quarterly magazine, Russ Rudin, a St. Louis SCI member, reported that about three years previously he attended a flea market in which a blue and gray stein, over six feet tall with a bust of Kaiser Wilhelm, was being offered for \$250. When it did not sell, it was put up for auction. Russ was in the bidding at \$115 when his wife said those dreaded words, "Where in the world would you have gone with such an elephant?" The stein or jug sold for \$125, probably to someone who did not bring his wife. The long-lost stein suddenly reappeared on January 21, 2020. On that date, a man using the name Carl on SteinTalk declared that he had found the long lost Dümller & Breiden stein and was seeking help. I immediately responded to his post. When I did not receive a reply, I asked Walt Vogdes to contact him.



Pictures 25 and 26. Friedrich III and Wilhelm II.

Walt then sent me some photos that he provided.

This one-of-a-kind exhibition jug was from the *Historismus* period. We know the jug is 2.1 meters tall (82 inches). Based on the height, I estimate the width is .77 meters (30 inches). A rough estimate of the capacity is no more than 150 liters (40 gallons). To Germans, 1888 is the year of the three emperors. Kaiser Wilhelm I died on March 8, 1888. He was succeeded by



Picture 27. Frieze on Right Side.



Picture 28. Frieze on Left Side.

his son, Kaiser Friedrich III, who only reigned 99 days. Upon the death of Kaiser Friedrich III, his son became Kaiser Wilhelm II on June 15, 1888. It was then that Peter Dümller decided to make his masterpiece honoring the two new emperors by placing their busts on the neck of his jug, Pictures 25 and 26.

On the front and back of the body of the jug, just under the busts, are two friezes, Pictures 27 and 28, depicting what I believe are scenes from The Iliad. These were probably from sculptures, but I could not locate them in my searches. I even tried using Google image and TinEye reverse search engines without success. In one scene may be Aphrodite pleading for the life of Paris as he was the one who had selected Aphrodite as the most beautiful goddess. The other scene may show Hebe, goddess of youth or the cup-bearer, serving ambrosia or nectar to one of the participants (Agamemnon or Priam) in the siege of Troy. In the background is Mt. Ida where the gods watched the Trojan war. Germania adorns the lid in Picture 29. She appears to be missing a sword or spear and her left arm appears to be broken off.



Picture 29. Lid.

Germania also appears in a niche at the bottom of the handle in Picture 30. Here she also appears to be missing part of her left arm. The Iliad would



Picture 30. Niche in Handle.

have been a logical choice by Peter Dümller as he was an amateur archeologist (he wrote a brochure on the castle overlooking Grenzau) just like Heinrich Schliemann, another German amateur archeologist, who discovered Troy in 1870. The bottom is marked "Finished in March 1889 D&B Höhr Nassau." There may have been some cracks repaired on the bottom. Peter Dümller knew it would not be practical to check the bottom markings, so he put a scroll at the foot of the warrior with the spear with the same manufacturing information. Dümller & Breiden won the gold medal at Köln in 1889. This has to be the winning jug. The initials "P" inside a "D" appears on the body of the jug, but it is easy to overlook. The body of the jug contains elaborate scrolls and several bearded men. While it was missing the three niches or alcoves with a knight on a horse that Russ Rudin described, I think we can chalk that up to a false memory after three years. The body of the stein can be seen in Picture 31.

With the date 1893 and the brewery in the Chicago area mentioned by Werner Sahm, I concentrated my

search on the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. I even found a couple of old articles stating that most of us were first introduced to German steins at that exposition. I have searched a lot of articles and pamphlets on the Columbian Exposition, but I did not find anything on German beer steins, let alone the D&B exposition jug. Most of the Chicago breweries were small and a British syndicate had tried to buy them up and started a price war in 1892. British brewery syndicates were also trying to take over in New York, Milwaukee and St. Louis. I decided to concentrate on the three largest breweries in that era.

George Ehert operated his brewery in New York City.²³ His brewery was the first to hit a production volume of 100,00 barrels when he became the largest brewer. His model were the

large Munich breweries drawing on the Isar River for their water. George Ehert started his brewery in a rural area near a dangerous passage on the East River called Hell Gate. He even named his company Hell Gate Brewery. Mettlach Form 1997 bears his portrait, and a special edition was made for his 25th Anniversary in 1891. However, I could not find the D&B exposition jug in his brewery. Germans dominated the brewing industry so much that at one time it was the official language of the brewing association. Most maintained close contact with their former homeland. This turned out to be George Ehert's downfall. He took a trip to Germany at the wrong time for health reasons and got trapped there when The Great War broke out. The U.S. Government seized his assets as "alien property" even though he was a naturalized citizen. His property was returned after the end of the war.

I moved on to my next target in Milwaukee, Pabst Brewing Company.²⁴ The company was started by Jacob Best, Jr. and Charles Best as a vinegar factory. It became a brewery two years later in 1844. Frederick Pabst originally operated a steamboat on the Great Lakes. When he stopped in Milwaukee, he met Maria Best and married into the Best Brewing Company family in 1862 and started learning the brewing business. Captain Pabst changed the name of the brewery in 1889. I had to use the interlibrary loan system to obtain a book on Pabst Brewing, but it did not reveal anything about the D&B jug. I found an inventory of the assets of the Pabst mansion. It did list two beer steins with an estimated value of \$10. I figured neither one would have been the D&B jug. I did not win the blue ribbon here, but then Pabst never won a blue ribbon either.

My last target was Lemp Brewery, best known for its Falstaff Beer.²⁵ This brewery was in the right place, St. Louis, and had a tragic history that could have obscured ownership of such a big jug. Lemp started as a grocery but switched to brewing when he realized beer was his best seller, Lemp used the caves around St. Louis to store their beer for natural refrigeration. He was one of



Picture 31 Body of Stein.

the first to brew lager beer and to ship his products nationally in refrigerated railroad cars. There were several suicides and early deaths in the Lemp Mansion, which is now said to be haunted. The Lemp's did have Merkelbach & Wick make some stoneware beer steins for them. The steins featured heavy pewter lids with the Lemp name on them. The body of the steins featured paintings of monks by Eduard von Grützner. Several were sold in the March 26, 2017 auction of Bill Mitchell's collection. I was able to buy one on ebay at a reduced price, but then mine did not have the Lemp lid. The mansion was said to have vaults in it where the family stored their paintings and other valuables when they went on vacation. I was unable to find any photographs or mention of the D&B jug. I still think this is the prime candidate for the original owner of the D&B jug.

The United States Entry

One of my searches for the world's largest beer stein led me to a short article in a 2013 issue of *Philadelphia Weekly*.²⁶ The article encourages readers to visit The Clay Studio to help decorate the world's largest ceramic beer stein. Intrigued, I contacted The Clay Studio and was informed that they could not provide details on its size as it subsequently was broken and destroyed. They did have some photos that they provided me.

Picture 32 shows Shane Buckley throwing the body of the stein on the potter's wheel. Judging his height to be under six feet, I estimate the height and width of the stein to be about four-and-a-half feet and two feet, respectively, with a capacity of around 250 liters or 66 gallons. Not a world record, but it is still impressive.

The Largest Ceramic Stein

Searching U.S. newspapers for the world's largest beer stein turned up this 1984 article²⁷ shown in Picture 33. It shows the Manfred Wutschke family of Dortmund, West Germany standing next to a mug or stein seven feet, five inches tall. A lid is not shown in the picture. I tried contacting the Dortmund

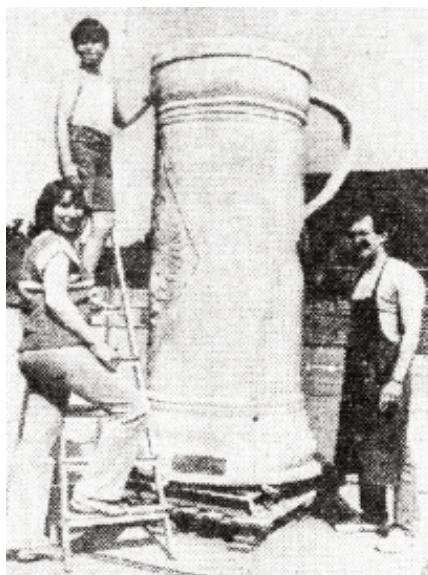


Picture 32. Clay Studio Stein.

brewery but they had no knowledge of who the stein was made for.

It took ten weeks to make and is claimed to hold 400 gallons. Based on the given height, I estimate the width would be about 29 inches. My rough calculations yield a volume of 837 liters or 221 gallons. That is still an impressive size. Was this stein used for some festival or brewery? Did it have a lid? Maybe one of our German members can come up with the answer.

Part II will cover the other steins five liters or more as well as the oddities and monstrosities that were made to compete for the Guinness Book of World Records.



Picture 33. Dortmund Stein.

Just as I was ready to send my article off for publication, I decided to make one last search for the world's largest beer stein. To my surprise an article from a Muncie, IN newspaper²⁸ claimed a German company was making a reproduction of an 1820 stein for \$547. It was claimed to be six-feet tall and holds 129 quarts (32.25 gallons or 122 liters). The author, Wes Gehring, was making fun of the high price, but it sounds like a bargain price to me. The source or date of his original reference was not revealed. I searched various combinations on Google and newspapers.com without success. Muncie is the home of Ball State University. As you may recall, my article on the Bennett Brothers in the December 2017 issue of *Prosit* revealed that the source of the Vulcan greeting, "Live Long and Prosper," was from the play *Rip Van Winkle*, popularized by the famous actor Joseph Jefferson in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century. I had also run across an article by a Ball State journalism professor that claimed the saying originated with Stephen Crane, author of *The Red Badge of Courage*. The professor had stopped short of his goal to find the truth. I was beginning to sense another fake news story. I think Wes Gehring saw the 1984 press photos from the Nuremberg beer fair showing a representative holding a 79-inch-tall stein based on an 1820 design that sells for about \$570. The height and price are a little off, but I have no idea where Mr. Gehring came up with the 129-quart capacity. A few newspapers converted the capacity to six six-packs (432 ounces or 3.4 gallons). Did someone drink five gallons? A couple of newspapers stated the capacity as 29 quarts or 7.25 gallons. Was someone sipping the beer? Did Wes mistakenly add 100 quarts? Maybe the changes were made for comic affects, after all the title of the column was Comedy Corner. Why not mention the man's height was eight feet? Now that would have been funny. Who cares about details when you have a tight deadline? The Nuremberg beer stein story did run in an Indianapolis paper, but I could not locate it in the Muncie paper.

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3. Go to the Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web/> and enter [stein-man.de/shop_content.php?colID=3889910](http://www.stein-man.de/shop_content.php?colID=3889910) then click on the earliest change date shown. You should see the web page showing the Girmscheid stein they claim holds 39 liters. If that does not work, just enter this url address: https://web.archive.org/web/20180901125334/http://www.stein-man.de/shop_content.php?colID=3889910
4. Go to the Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web/> and enter http://www.schnitzelhaustampa.com:80/beer_stein.html then click on the earliest change date shown. You should see the web page showing the Girmscheid stein they claim holds 39 liters. If that does not work, just enter this url address: https://web.archive.org/web/20010728083443/http://www.schnitzelhaustampa.com:80/beer_stein.html
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18. *The Indianapolis Star*, November 22, 1984, For the Very Thirsty, page 13. This also appeared in other newspapers.
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20. A special thanks to our pied piper who provided a key lead in solving this 37-year old mystery, Aron Garceau's web site of paintings of bag pipers and of paintings by David Teniers the Younger can be found at <http://www.prydein.com/pipes/>
21. Web Gallery of Art, https://www.wga.hu/html_m/t/teniers/jan2/2/kermess.html
22. Masters in Art, Teniers the Younger, Flemish School, 1907, at Google Books, <https://books.google.com/books?id=oK0pAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA252-IA2&lpg=PA252-IA2&dq=%22masters+in+art%22+1907+tenier+the+younger&source=bl&ots=u5at2QCBsm&sig=ACfU3U2tGgaa4loXh1VEpq6uaxmptFOugw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiorM-AosbzAhXW6Z4KHdLwDYoQ6AF6BAgQEAM#v=onepage&q=%22masters%20in%20art%22%201907%20tenier%20the%20younger&f=false> you can also download a PDF version of the article.
23. There is a lot of interesting information about George Ehret that can be found by searching the Internet. I even read his book Twenty-five Years of Brewing with an *Illustrated History of American Beer Dedicated to the Friends of George Ehret*. You can even download a digital copy at https://books.google.com/books/about/Twenty_five_Years_of_Brewing.html?id=5BMZAAAAYAAJ
24. Numerous information is also available on Pabst Brewing on the Internet. I used my library's interlibrary loan to get a book on the history of Pabst Brewing. I was hoping to spy the lost D&B stein or at least read mention about it, but I was disappointed once again.
25. The Lemp family has a fascinating history that you can find on the Internet. Be sure to read about the Haunted Mansion, which now serves as a restaurant.
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What's going on here?

By Michael Schneider

I first saw this stein at the "Stump the experts" table this past June in Maryland. It really interested me because I had never seen this scene nor anything like it before. A few weeks after the mini-convention, I couldn't take the mystery anymore. I called my friend Bob Horen who sent me pictures of the one he had in his collection and then the research began.

After two days of intense research (and harassing over 20 of my friends in Austria and Germany), my friend Vitus in Munich figured out what this scene is depicting.

As stein collectors we all know of the *Reinheitsgebot* (German beer purity law) and its effects on the brewing process. A lesser known aspect of this law is the taxes imposed on the brewers. The dates on this stein coincide with changes in taxation on the brewers and their ingredients.



The most recent date (April 1, 1910) was when there was a change in the standardized measurement of weight. The original measurement was in hectoliters, where 1HL (hektoliter) was equal to 53.5 - 57.1 Kg (kilograms) of malt. With this change in standardized weight came the need for new scales to measure the ingredients for proper taxation.

The magistrate thought it would be a good idea to pass these costs onto the brewers.

Not only did brewers feel like they were getting the raw end of the deal with the new weight conversion, but now they had to pay for the instrument which facilitated this anguish. Needless to say, this led to a great deal of turmoil between the government and the brewers.

From this turmoil, the stein in question was born. It was most likely used by brewers in a satirical way to make fun of the new system and scales. It depicts a slightly aesthetically unsettling government official sitting in a barrel pointing to the "target weight" where 1HL and the new measurement of Kg. are equal. The dates on the stein leading up to 1910 are just used to reiterate all the times the government has been a pain to the brewers with taxes.

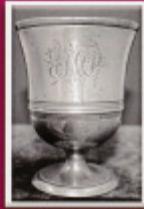
Questions/Comments/Critiques? I'd love to hear them all. Please email me at modelt821@gmail.com



BRITISH PEWTER PUB POTS OF THE 19TH CENTURY



Allan S. Fogel
With
Ita Fogel



The Collector's Bookshelf

British Pewter Pub Pots of the 19th Century

By Allan Fogel

Paperback, 62 pages, self-published February 2021.

The American collector is likely to refer to the collectible objects written about by Allan Fogel as pewter mugs or possibly ale tankards. The proper English term is "pot", and the author uses the term "pub pot" collectively when referring to unlidded tankards, beakers, goblets and footed cups, all of which were standard drinking vessels used in British pubs, inns, taverns and other establishments throughout the 19th century.

Allan draws upon 50 years of experience collecting and selling pewter pub pots, and he remains a student today. In this book he covers the pewter craft, provides an introduction to pewter marks, discusses the variety of pot forms and offers collecting tips. Each topic is well illustrated.

You may find this book on eBay, or buy it directly from the author for \$13, shipping included. Send a check with your request to Allan Fogel, 14547 Pebblestone Dr., Silver Spring, Md. 20905, or contact him by email as twintankard@aol.com.





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Founded in 2001 and opened in September 2004, AMOCA is the largest museum in the United States devoted exclusively to ceramic art and historic innovations in ceramic technology. It is located in an area abounding with ceramic history and internationally recognized clay artists from the Arts and Crafts Movement, the 60's Clay Revolution and the current Studio Pottery Era. AMOCA champions the art, history, creation and technology of ceramics through exhibitions, collections, outreach and studio programming. Teaching and demonstrations of ceramics are available in our studios.



The Mettlach Wares exhibit in the Lower Gallery of AMOCA was organized with the help of a Getty Multicultural intern and a Windgate Museum intern. The current exhibition focuses on works by several Mettlach artists, using items in the Museum collection donated by the late Robert D. and Colette D. Wilson. This exhibit runs through July 2022.



Pictured above, seven Villeroy & Boch Mettlach beer steins, all circa 1890-1910. From left to right, 1) Relief #24 designed by Ludwig Foltz; 2) Etched #1932 designed by Christian Warth; 3) Etched #2583 designed by Fritz Quidenus; 4) Etched #2075 designed by Otto Hupp; 5) Cameo #2652 by Johann Baptist Stahl; 6) Etched #3168 designed by Ludwig Hohlwein; 7) Etched #2134 designed by Heinrich Schlitt.

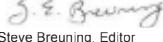
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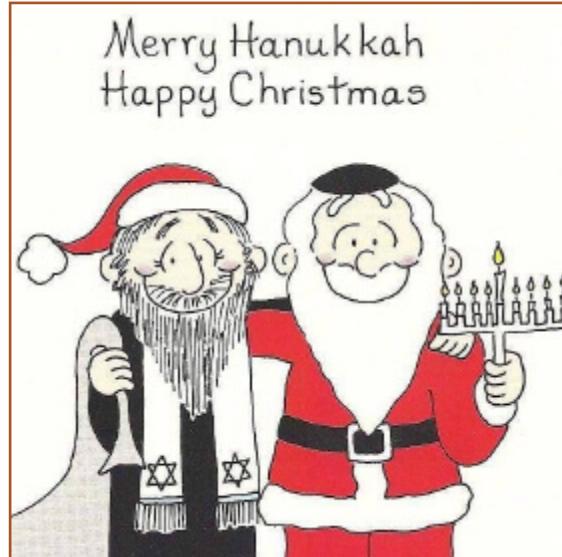


This very nice pewter lid appeared in Prost more than 32 years ago. Described as "an intriguing engraved lid," no additional information was provided. Is "engraved lid" the appropriate description? Is there another term we could be/should be using? And just what does this cozy scene depict? Is the young man holding a magnifying glass and performing an eye examination? Let us know what YOU think.

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