

STEIN COLLECTORS INTERNATIONAL



Regimentals Were Traditional Personalized Steins For Proud German Troopers Before World War I

A popular collector's item is the German military or regimental stein. Many collectors specialize in the personalized porcelain pieces while most others include at least one regimental in their collections.

The basic stein is pure white porcelain. Colorful pictures and wordy inscriptions adorn each regimental.

Craftsmanship is seen in all parts of regimental steins but is perhaps most in evidence in the hand-painted designs and illustrations. Some of the decorative print actually protrudes. A light touch of the fingers on the illustrated art will usually indicate that the stein has been painted individually. Similar to an original oil painting, the art work can thus be recognized by touch as well as sight. The brightness, softness, or richness of colors on regimentals are signs of a lost art.

The coloring was made possible by the I. G. Farben Company which was destroyed in World War I. The company's secret processes and chemical combinations were lost.

When a non-commissioned officer completed his two years of military duty in the German army and became a member of the reserves, he was presented a stein in the name of the Kaiser (the German government).

German soldiers were paid little in actual wages (about 25 cents a day). A fierce military pride, however, was part of the reason that every soldier cherished his own stein after his compulsory two years in the military. The stein became a lifelong reminder of service years. The actual value and sentimental value of the steins was many times over a week's salary.

Hand printed in large German letters on each regimental, usually at the top of the porcelain part, is the soldier's name and rank. 'Grenadier Reichert' is a typical rank and surname listing that might be found on a stein.

The steins are always dated. Often the two-year service stint is indicated such as "1900-1902."

Other printed information on regimentals is a mixture of tradition, legend, and official regiment information. Along the base of a stein might be the following wording: "II Bad. Grenad. Regt. K. W. I. No. 110 9 Komp. in Mannheim."

Translated; The Second Baden Regiment. Kaiser Wilhelm, I. No. 110 9 Company at Mannheim.

Many steins have only symbolic insignia while others have small illustrated panels of fighting scenes, maneuvers, or farewells. The insignia and pictures are usually the most colorful part of the stein.

On the sides of the porcelain handles can be found printed lists of all the soldiers in the unit. It is interesting to note that the owner of the stein will usually have his name on this lengthy list in small lettering as well as his own prominent, personalized listing on the front.

Colored bands in gold, deep red, or other hues surround the regimental at base and top.

Another characteristic of the regimental is the lithophane (the picture in the bottom of the stein). The lithophane, which is seen when the stein is emptied and held to the light, might be a picture of the Kaiser, King Ludwig of Bavaria, a drinking scene in a gasthaus, or a soldier bidding adieu to his girlfriend or wife (depending, of course, on his marital status).

Although many collectors refer to lithophanes as "light pictures," the literal translation is not such. Lithophanes are made by carving dyes into the porcelain pieces. Only porcelain steins have lithophanes since the "light picture" would not show on thick pottery pieces that will not allow light to pass through them.



Grenadier Kreer's Stein

The first lithophanes were introduced in 1828, according to Amelia E. Rawding (*Hobbies* magazine, July 1958, pp. 66-67). At first created entirely by hand, molds were eventually made that allowed numerous steins to be cast.

The translucent objects in a lithophane are formed by a composition of kaolin, feldspar and soapstone.

Incidentally, lithophanes are found in other than regimental steins. Some scenes on other steins might depict a landscape, a certain occupation, or a small village. Nudes in lithophanes are a "new" conception of stein art and would rarely, if ever, be an indication of an old stein—especially a regimental.

Variety in the pewter lids on regimentals is noticed in any array of military

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Regimentals Were Traditional Personalized Steins

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steins. Some lids are actually artillery shells with the millimeter measurements shown on them. Some rare ones of this type can be unscrewed to reveal a polished stone or jewel underneath.

Typical lids are similar to toy metal soldiers. In fine detail, the figures are a further indication of the type of military unit. A cannon would be atop the stein of an artillery unit. A soldier on a rearing horse would indicate a cavalry unit. The lid is always a sign of the type of unit.

The pewter thumb lift is usually a part of the overall lid. Thumb lids are as ornate as the lid proper. Some lids are initialed with symbolic letters.

Some Germans report that metal was so rare during World War I that many very patriotic people took the pewter lids off their steins for the Fatherland to make ammunition. There are some steins today that have lids that do not actually belong on them. At one time or another a pewter craftsman added a new lid to an old stein.

Authenticity in regimentals can be difficult to ascertain. Fake steins have been known to have tapered bodies, larger at the bottom and smaller at the top. Nearly all authentic regimentals are straight bodied.

R. H. Mohr reported a situation where a collector's stein was dated 1882/84. Kaiser Wilhelm's picture on the stein indicated fraud. The Kaiser didn't begin his reign until 1888.

Regimentals were first made in 1892, according to one source. The last official ones were produced in 1914, just before the war.

Most of the pure white porcelain was produced by the Meissen factory in Dresden (now behind the Iron Curtain in East Germany). All were ordered by the Kaiser's army. They were next sent to a special decorating place where the pictures and lettering were affixed.

The pewter lids were the final addition to the finished regimental stein. Again, a special artisan did the work.

Prices on regimentals start today at \$40 for steins in fair condition. One collector reported, "You can't get them for less than \$50." It might be safer to say that a purchase of a good regimental for under \$50 is a good buy.

One regimental collector reports that their prices have changed "about \$25 in the last 12 years."

When asked what the German soldier might have paid for his stein, an antique

dealer in California said, "Their original value was around, I'd say, about 20 marks." At today's economy that would be approximately \$5. Of course the original value to the owner was closer to priceless.

Many regimental collectors take particular pride in the fact that their steins are personal excerpts of military history and were a decorative piece that brought about many a nostalgic conversation in many German households for years and years.

R. H. Mohr of Rockford, Illinois writes that "would-be collectors of regimentals should be very careful as these are still being made and may be purchased for \$24.95 each.

It has been reported that some of the earlier regimentals were made of pottery, had false bottoms, and were fitted with musical works. Basically, however, regimentals are porcelain and are not musical steins.

It's true that some companies are duplicating regimentals in Germany today. However, the experienced collector can easily discover differences in colors, shiny pewter lids, and general craftsmanship.

The ornate regimental steins were actually used. Not simple enough for a casual beer, the fancy pieces were dusted off and filled with foam for soldier reunions and special ceremonial occasions.



TWO STEINS with the symbol of the Weimar Republic

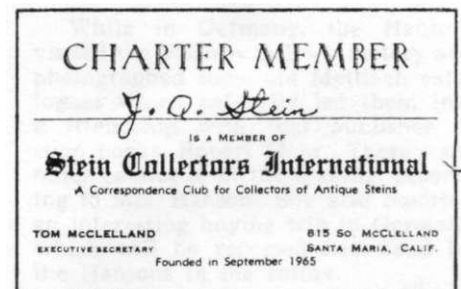
Official Cards to All SCI Members

All members of Stein Collectors International received a charter membership card with this edition — and only *one* card per membership!

A membership card will be given to every joiner in the organization.

At last check the card was absolutely worthless. But there will only be about a hundred people in the world to have one of these "worthless" cards.

All memberships dated before New Year's day 1966 will be considered to be charter memberships.





Double Copies To SCI Members

Maybe the best things in life are free, but SCI's bulletin is an exception. It costs a quarter a copy—one dollar dues a year for four quarterlies and a membership card.

Once again, however, an extra copy of *Gemütlichkeit* is being sent to members in frantic hope it will wind up in the hands of another potential member.

The extra one is free . . . so pass it along.

Back Copies? And/Or Extras

Back copies of *der Gemütlichkeit* can be ordered at 25 cents each. (The only back copy so far was the September number.)

Extra copies can be ordered by members at the rate of a dollar a year for four extras per edition.

Stein Content

I am considering doing an article on "buying steins at auction." Members can contribute by writing their experiences at auctions.

A few subscriptions to *Gemütlichkeit* were given as gifts. One was a graduation gift to Robert Coombs of Ossineke, Michigan.

A surprise will be in store for Capt. Raymond Hanson of Glendale, Arizona this Christmas. In his traditional stocking will be copies of the first two editions of the bulletin—a gift from his wife Patricia.

Incidentally, the Hansons just returned from a four year stint of duty in Germany with the Air Force. That's where they picked up "the stein habit and a taste for German life and customs."

While in Germany, the Hansons visited the Villeroy & Boch factory and photographed some old Mettlach catalogues which naturally led them into a friendship with that publisher of stein books, Robert Mohr. There's another catalogue in the making, according to Mrs. Hanson. She also reported an interesting buying trip in Germany which will be reported first-hand by the Hansons in the future.

Serving as executive secretary (self-appointed) is no honor. The stein club idea was simply an outgrowth of this one man's hobby. With milder than mild success on the club's first edition (only 21 members at the time), the exec. sec. sent out at least 800 copies of *Gemütlichkeit*. Exorbitant printing costs coupled with our country's low postal rates (four or five cent stamps x 800) made the initial organization costly. A smile came to this man's face as new members joined daily into December. As membership passed 90 and headed for the first hundred, I rationalized that membership dues might at least cover the cost of one (1) bulletin and its mailing.

My original plan was to have a quality roster of members. That plan has not changed. Perhaps I'm hungry though. I would like to have ALL stein collectors EVERYWHERE join our ranks. We need volume to approach a break-even point. I'm not begging for any members to bring a buddy to lunch, but some of you might pass along the word to our collecting comrades. Stein collectors are hither and yon. Only stein collectors can help me to locate them. I would appreciate names and addresses of collectors so I could send them our first two bulletins and get them into SCI.

At publication time, Kansas City, Seattle, and Pittsburgh stood out as the cities with the most members—three each.

Perhaps because of relatives and friends in Santa Maria and other California cities, the leading state was California with 25 members. Other leading states in the membership race were Ohio with seven members and Missouri and Texas with six each.

Many collectors have been sending photographs. Any such valuable material will be returned.

It is hoped that the bulletin can be pictorial and not overly verbose. However, it is imperative that we have large photographs of individual steins in order to insure good printing production. It is also helpful and important to have all available information about a stein so that it will not be pictured just to be admired. Since the pictures will be black and white, a description of colors, materials, written expressions and translations, etc., is desirable.

One of the club's most avid collectors is Russ Rudin of St. Louis. His collection includes more than 300 Mettlachs, quite a few ivories ("My favorite"), Royal Viennas, some silver and gold tankards, and other miscellaneous drinking vessels.

Says Russ, "I collect all drinking vessels, coconut cups, ostrich egg cups, enamel with scenes between the glasses."

By the way, if the first (and perhaps the last) SCI national convention ever comes to be, St. Louis might be the desirable place. The heart-of-the-nation location and the fact that there are several collectors in the city make it a real possibility. Would 1970 be too soon?

Another enthusiastic new member is John O'Connor of Massachusetts. John phoned me in California to wish luck to the group and to offer a few names and addresses of potential joiners.

The interesting part of opening the mail is the reading of lively information on steins and collections. Not all questions will be answered directly. Our pages should include the answers eventually.

One new member is Bob Johnson of Glendora, California. I met Bob at an antique auction in Los Angeles (Abell's auction house) one rainy Sunday. By some coincidence there were dozens of steins up for bidding. Bob, a deputy district attorney in Los Angeles County, had a collection of "about 20 steins, primarily lithophanes." He wound up with 24 new (but old) ones at the auction. "I am surely a stein collector now," he wrote in his membership letter.

Free Ads for Collectors

Stein Exchange

The STEIN EXCHANGE column will include any written material pertaining to steins. It is not strictly a buy-and-sell exchange. Moreover, this column is for an exchange of ideas and information.

MIGHT WE SUGGEST an "I want to know" column? Readers could then send in their questions (an adjunct to promotion) and an editorial invitation issued under the heading requesting other readers to write in their answers if they have them. We have dozens to ask.—Mrs. Martha E. Laestar, 2130 Dorman Drive, Portsmouth, Ohio 45662.

I KNOW the Mettlach factory burned down during the first World War, and that there were other Villeroy & Boch factories (Dresden and others) which were operating making porcelain, etc. into the thirties. Are they still going and do they make steins? Is what I'd like to know?—Fallis Oliver, 1705 Lasuen Road, Santa Barbara, California.

BEGINNING COLLECTOR of German Regimental steins desires to add to collection. Send description and price.—Richard Bosquet, 6715 Dixie Highway, Bridgeport, Michigan.

WE HAVE a two-foot elf holding a glass of beer in hand with words "Prosit" and the company "The Roewe Kamp Co., Oshkosh, Wis. on the front of his apron. For sale.—Mrs. A. J. Verborg, 2861 Colorado, Los Angeles., California.

WE'RE ANXIOUS to help dealers in their collecting. Send for listing of steins on hand—Clark Parkins, 1708 West 39th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64111.

I HAVE JUST SECURED the R H. Mohr book on Mettlach steins and that covers my available information. Is there any comparable literature on regimental lithophanes?—Norman E. Sherman, 4295 Marina Drive, Hope Ranch Park, Santa Barbara, Calif. 93105.

WHY, DURING the 1800's (primarily 1850's) did many of the pewter steins have glass bottoms? I have heard many answers to this question from many different people but I am still at a loss for the right one.—Randy Reinstedt, P. O. Box 6546, Carmel, California.

NOW, IF THE proud owner of the "Black Forest" stein would send me a colored photo with view of tall tower of Mettlach Abbey, I would be more than happy to pay for photo and postage. To make myself clear, I am speaking to the tall tower on the lid of the stein.—A. B. Christoffersen, 1333 Forty-fourth SW, Seattle, Wash. 98116.

I HAVE one very unusual stein that has a frog in the bottom of it. I have never seen or heard of another of this type. Ed. Note: (Does anyone know the tradition of the frog stein?)—Perry L. Righter, RFD No. 1, Mexico, Missouri.

I AM ESPECIALLY interested in finding out where I can get a paperback that lists steins, how many and what sizes were made of each, and the dealers fair price. Several years ago I bought a stein from a dealer and she had a paperback as described above. I have checked with all of the dealers in this area and none of them have seen such a book.—Robert D. Walker, 901 Vernier Road, Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan 48236.

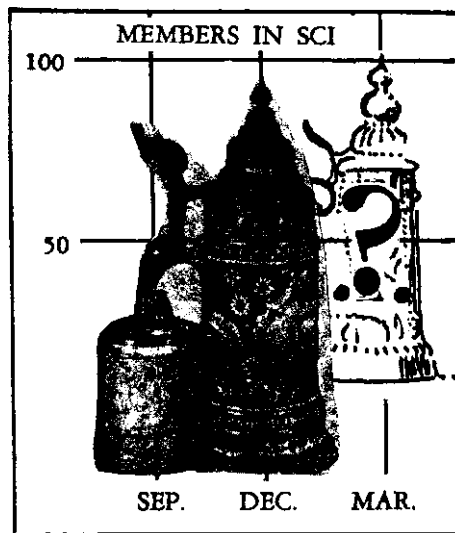
YOUNG COLLECTOR wishes to purchase reasonably priced steins. Send description and price.—Robert J. Coombs, Ossineke, Michigan.

ONE OF MY STEINS is a blue, grey salt glaze with a pewter lid. The bottom mark is an impressed six-pointed star containing the letters RM. Does anyone know this mark?—Miss Joan C. Levine, 1361 Kew Ave., Hewlett, New York 11557.

CHARACTER AND METTLACH steins wanted to enlarge collection.—Keith J. Smith, 419 Hayden Ave., Dayton, Ohio 45431.

It is expected that the exchange section of the *Gemütlichkeit* will expand as collectors begin to share their interests.

MEMBERSHIP ZOOMS



Membership in SCI soared to new heights in mid-December as word of the unusual club spread throughout the United States. As membership neared the century mark, momentum seemed to be picking up rather than tapering off.

When the March bulletin is ready for members, it is hoped the membership figure will be closer to two hundred.

Members should tell prospective new members that all memberships postmarked before New Year's Day will be considered to be charter members in SCI. All charter members will receive a charter membership card and will be listed on the SCI's official charter, an 8x10-inch parchment page suitable for framing.

SCI is the world's only correspondence club for Stein Collectors (we think).

Why the Lids?

Yes, Lids Kept Brew Bug-Free

Member John Hickman of Richmond, Virginia wrote to verify a statement that the lids on steins are primarily a guard against insects.

Hickman wrote, "The hordes of flies which have for centuries been unpleasantly plentiful in Germany . . . created the practice of covering steins and tankards . . . in the late 16th century, it was decreed that all food and drinking vessels should be covered."

Procrastinate Not Do It Today!

Join Stein Collectors International and be the only member in your block. Four copies of *der Gemütlichkeit* per year will be yours.

Send check, money order, two rolls of pennies, or an IOU for one dollar to Tom McClelland, 815 South McClelland, Santa Maria, Calif. 93454. Now!

Be a *charter* member: Send dues before the year changes.

Character Steins?

Whazzat? What's a character stein?

Find out in the March edition of this quarterly. Character steins will be featured.



JUST TWO of many Mettlachs from J. J. O'Neil's collection.

A bulletin for collectors of antique, or just old, beer steins, published quarterly (March, June, September, December) throughout the year. One year's membership is one dollar (U.S. currency). Back copies: 25 cents per copy. Bulk orders: \$1 per year for four extra copies per edition (to members only) Published by Tom McClelland, 815 South McClelland, Santa Maria, California 93454