

KANSAS Button Society
Int. Visitors Welcome, May 2nd 1:30
to 5:00 P.M.; May 3rd, 1:30 to 4:30
P.M.



EXAMINING the riveted glass button collection of Mary Florence Lawton (right) Wichita at the Kansas Button Society display are Mrs. Robert Hill, Wichita (left) and Mrs. Clement Strong, 1208 Prairie, president of the state society. The display only entry in its category, received a merit award.

1959

Button, Button Who's Got Etc.

By PAUL STANFIELD

Calicoes, watchbacks, igloos, gay nineties, cats, vegetable ivories and paperweights generated their own excitement at the Baker Hotel Saturday.

They're all types of buttons — favorite conversational topic among members of the Kansas Button Society who are meeting here this weekend.

More than 275 trays of buttons — each containing from 20 to 70 buttons each — entered in the state contest by 23 society members are being displayed at the meeting, with blue, red, green and white ribbons in abundance.

Hundreds of Buttons

The display will be open to the public again from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday.

The state society uses the National Society's classification in its contest. This means well over material, pattern, type, size and illustrations. Special awards boost the national total past 5,000 categories.

Fine collections with no competition in their categories received white merit ribbons.

of the finer points judges look for in a button contest — which includes close scrutiny of the backs of all buttons.

Technical Angle

"This tray was disqualified," she said, pointing to a collection of what appeared to be china buttons, "because that button isn't china. It's ceramic."

Among the china collections were many calicoes — buttons with a tiny, colored design similar to that on this type of material.

She pointed with pride to some watchbacks — golden buttons so called because that's what they resemble.

Regarding the china buttons she said:

"I checked them first to see if there were any of the rarer types such as igloos." Igloos are rounded buttons which resemble the Eskimo house of the same name.

She pointed with delight the tiny glass buttons which resemble miniature paperweights, with tiny colorful figures imbedded in each one.

Wins Other Prizes

gories.

Fine collections with no competition in their categories received white merit ribbons.

The judges, Mrs. Glen Toalson of Osceola, Mo., and Mrs. Lillian Hall, Kansas City, Mo., spent more than 14 hours together minutely examining the more than 6,000 buttons before all prizes were awarded.

Mrs. Clement Strong, 1208 Prairie, president and chairman of the state meeting, was still busy recording prizes Saturday afternoon.

"I've only been collecting about four years," she said, "but it's fascinating."

Standard Array

Two Wichita collectors, Mrs. Robert Hill and Mrs. Howard Wolff, each entered 55 trays in the shows. Each tray must meet national specifications as to size (9 by 12 inches) and number of buttons.

There are four size classifications, ranging from diminutive to large plus three combination categories. A tray of diminutive buttons must contain 70—no more, no less. Twenty large buttons fill a tray.

Buttons on display range from exquisite jeweled specimens and the ornate gay nineties (large jeweled metal buttons characteristic of that period) to the matter-of-fact overall buttons and "good-years," plain rubber buttons made between 1849 and 1870.

Cat Categories

Two major divisions — old and new (post-World War I) — are divided into types of materials — glass, china, metal, vegetable ivory (a button made from a South American nut) and many others. There are subdivisions of types within each material classification and size divisions within each of these.

That's why the category list runs into the thousands.

Cats, insects, animals, etc. are buttons with this type of illustration. When you consider that there can be black cats, metal cats, jeweled cats, enameled cats and assorted cats (some of these are displayed here) the number of categories is not surprising.

Collectors find the hobby challenging and educational — and hard to drop once they start. Mrs. Hill — who garnered a total of 35 blue ribbons with her entries—picked up the collecting of her two daughters after they married and left home.

Study Art

"Dad and I started classifying them, and kept going," Mrs. Hill said.

"When you study buttons you study art, music, history, and religion," she said. "Buttons are art."

The collector may trade with other collectors, buy from dealers and rummage in friends old button boxes to get their treasures. Several collectors have cards and boxes of buttons on sale at the display.

Some can be bought for 25 cents.

"The ceiling depends on how badly you want one," laughed Mrs. Hill. "I paid \$25 for one." Rare specimens can run higher. Sixteen of Mrs. Hill's awards were specials — categories for which society members had provided \$1 cash prizes, the only cash awards.

Mrs. Toalson explained some

glass buttons which resemble miniature paperweights, with tiny colorful figures imbedded in each one.

Wins Other Prizes

Mrs. Toalson—who started her collection a few years ago when she became intrigued by her mother's collection which had been left her—has won two national blue ribbons with china buttons.

Collectors who have interesting buttons which don't fit competition categories also are displaying some of these at the contest. Mrs. Lula Stapleton, 516 West 18th, has a tray of buttons from different foreign countries. Mrs. B. H. Moon, 613 East D, has a button from every state button society which has one.

The Kansas Button Society is not large—about 80 members, only four of them men—but they have the enthusiasm of thousands.

It was difficult to see any chance for conversational lags at the dinner Saturday night or the business meeting scheduled for Sunday.