

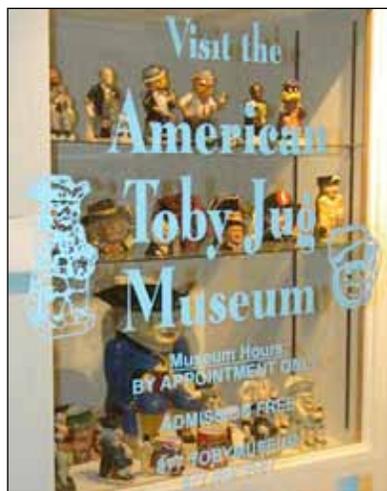


AMERICAN TOBY JUG MUSEUM

910 Chicago Avenue, Evanston, Illinois 60202, 1-877-TOBYMUSEUM, (1-877-862-9687)

A Collector's Visit to the Museum by Vern Woodruff

With Royal Doulton's archives sold off over the past 5-10 years, where could a person go to see Royal Doulton's remarkable history of Character Jugs and Tobies, as well as rare prototypes? Instead of booking a trip to Doulton's home in England, you need only travel a few hours to the west to Evanston, IL (just north of Chicago) and visit the American Toby Jug Museum. Since Doulton's archives no longer exist, this Museum is the only collection in existence (as far as is known) that contains every Character and Toby Jug, and Derivative, ever put into production by Doulton. In addition, around 90% of the known prototype jugs are represented. Many additional color trials are on display too.



In August, my family was fortunate to be able to visit the American Toby Jug Museum, located at 910 Chicago Ave, Evanston, IL 60202. The museum contains over 8,000 Toby and Character Jugs from around the world, dating from the 1760's to today. The museum was founded by Stephen M. Mullins, who also wrote the authoritative book on Doulton jugs, "A Century of Royal Doulton Character and Toby Jugs". The museum is HUGE, and had enough displays of interest that Verne (age 8), Carl (age 6) and Mariann (age 5)

were entertained for over an hour before Carla left with them. Below, they are shown with a giant Toby Philpot jug that was commissioned by the American Toby Jug Museum. It is the largest Toby Jug in the world, standing over 3 feet tall. Originally intended as a limited edition of 50, only 1 was actually made. The rest of the trial samples fell apart in the kiln due to the size of the Toby. This jug greets you just inside the entrance of the museum. Also seen in the picture is a painting depicting Doulton's Johnny Applesseed jug.



The following information was taken from a brochure for the museum:

"The American Toby Jug Museum features the World's largest collection of Toby and Character Jugs, including the most complete collection of Royal Doulton Character and Toby Jugs. You will find hundreds of 18th and 19th Century Toby Jugs by Ralph Wood, Enoch Wood, Thomas Wheildon, John Astbury and other early Potters from the Staffordshire, Leeds and Portobello Areas. Also featured is perhaps the finest collection of French Majolica figural jugs in North America.

Included within the Museum are complete collections of Toby and Character Jugs and teapots produced in the early and late 20th century by well-known English ceramics manufacturers including Shorter and Son, Lancaster-Sandland, Kevin Francis, Beswick, Sylvac, Royal Winton, Royal Worcester, Wedgwood & Co., Roy Kirkham, Wood & Sons, Wilkinson, and Burgess & Leigh.

Major French Majolica Makers represented include Sarreguemines, Fives-Lille, St. Clement, St. Amand, Poet Laval, and Nimy Les Moines. Other complete collections include figural jugs from German producers Royal Bayreuth, Schafer & Vater, and Goebel; Italian Capo de Monte; plus representatives from the United States, Canada, Australia and 20 countries around the world."

The museum is unmatched in telling the history of Toby and Character Jugs, with actual pieces on display to illustrate that history. Plus, it is free and open to the public. While there are other large collections of Doulton in existence, I am not aware of any others that are open to the public like this. While there are over 8,000 pieces on display, the centerpiece is the collection of 1300+ Royal Doulton Toby and Character jugs, and Derivatives. This includes more than 200 rare and unique prototype and color trial jugs, some of which I had never even seen a picture of before.

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While I mainly collect Doulton jugs and have only a handful of jugs from other manufacturers, I was fascinated with the incredible variety and number of jugs produced over the years. Since Doulton has produced very few jugs since the early 2000's, I was very surprised to see examples of quality jugs from other manufacturers that have been produced during that time. I spent over 5 hours touring the museum, but only about the last 30 minutes looking over the Doulton display because the jugs from other manufacturers were so enthralling. Steve is incredibly knowledgeable about all the jugs on display, which is truly impressive given the number of items in the collection. I could have easily spent another hour in the museum, but that gives me a reason to make a return visit in the future.



As a compliment to the picture of the World's biggest Toby, here is a picture of the smallest. For reference, I used a dollar bill to show the jug's size.

Since my knowledge of Toby and Character Jugs is mainly limited to Doulton, I was unaware of the early history of Tobies. I learned quite a bit, and it was fantastic to see incredibly rare pieces illustrating that history. The information below comes from "The American Toby Jug Museum Presents A Bit Of Toby History".

- The first Toby creator is not conclusively known, but various historians have bestowed this honor upon John Astbury, Thomas Whieldon, Ralph Wood, Aaron Wood and John Voyez. Some date Toby's creation to be 1750, but most believe it to be a slight bit later – between 1760 – 1770. Ralph Wood is commonly credited as "Toby's Father", but we tend to favor either John Astbury or Thomas Whieldon as Toby's creator.
- The most well known was the Ordinary Toby, a jovial seated drinking man, who holds a jug of ale in his left hand balanced on his knee, sporting the common costume of the day. Toby became the most famous character throughout the British Empire and beyond. The original name Toby is somewhat obscure, but most likely comes from the possibly apocryphal character Toby Philpot, renowned in song and print for excelling in boozing.
- In the later 1700's, Toby Jugs became common drinking and pouring vessels at local pubs and taverns. While his tri-corn hat spout was perfect for pouring, these Tobies most often had a hollow cap that fit into the crown of the hat, creating a cup from which to drink. Two hundred years later, due to loss and breakage, a Toby still sporting his crown is a rare find.
- Toby Jug production grew throughout the 19th century with the creation of many new humorous, eccentric or historical figures. It was still common to use the general term "Toby" to refer to any full-bodied figural jug of these types. In addition to the Ordinary Toby, other best known Toby Jugs of the 18th and 19th centuries are the Thin Man, Squire, Hearty Goodfellow, Snufftaker, Sailor, Man on a Barrel, Lord Howe, Collier, Drunken Sal, Gin Woman, and Martha Gunn. The 19th century added new jugs such as the Cross-legged Toby and Sir John Falstaff. By the end of the 19th century, the popularity of the Toby Jug had risen such that Tobies were being produced in France, Germany, America and other parts of the world.



- The 20th century brought on the popularity of the Character Jug, a derivative of the Toby Jug that depicts only the head and shoulders of the figure. Charles Noke of Royal Doulton, the largest producer to date, can be called the Father of the Character Jug. In the 1930's, he created a series of Character Jugs based on Charles Dickens' folklore characters that led to the great variety and collectability of Character Jugs into the 21st century (case of prototype Doulton is shown at right).

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- Although Toby is quite an ever-changing fellow, he is always a comfortable figure and friend to all. Obviously, he has won over the heart of the American Toby Jug Museum's curator, and after visiting the museum, he will undoubtedly do the same with yours. With over 100 cabinets holding more than 8,000 pieces, the museum is nothing less than a wonder that will never cease to amaze any visitor.
- Your visit to the American Toby Jug Museum takes you on a trip through time and place. It begins at the city of Stoke-on-Trent in England, the birthplace of Toby and Character Jugs, and leads you over two hundred fifty years to the latest 21st century productions.

The museum is a true gem, and well worth a visit by any one that has an interest in any aspect of pottery. For those of us that avidly collect Royal Doulton, a visit to the American Toby Jug Museum is as close as you can come to visiting the Doulton Archives. Even those that do not collect many Toby or Character jugs will find the museum fascinating. Since it has enough interesting items to keep the attention of three little kids for over an hour, any Doulton collector would be able to spend many multiples of that looking over the intriguing and captivating collection. I would strongly encourage ORDCC club members to visit the museum. For more information, check out the website www.tobymuseum.com or call 1-877-TOBY-MUSEUM (1-877-862-9687). On my family's behalf, many thanks to Steve for opening his museum for our visit!

One recent bit of news that jug collectors will be especially interested in is a 64-page supplement to the definitive Doulton jug book, *A Century of Royal Doulton Character and Toby Jugs*. This book is currently at the printer and will be introduced for sale at Pascoe & Co's West Palm Beach Collectors show at the end of January. For anyone that can attend the show, Steve will be giving a lecture on newly discovered prototypes and will also have about 40 prototypes from the Museum on display.

Here is some background information on Steve from one of the museum's brochures.

Stephen M. Mullins is the Founder, Collector, and Curator of the American Toby Jug Museum. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College and the University of Michigan Business School and is currently Chairman of a Chicago-based real estate investment firm, as well as a competitive National Champion Masters Swimmer. He started collecting Toby & Character Jugs over sixty years ago when a camp counselor in Canada enticed him with a Royal Doulton brochure to spend the balance of his camp candy money, all of \$9, to buy six small Character Jugs. Today the collection housed in the American Toby Jug Museum numbers over 8,000 Toby & Character Jugs from around the world dating from the 1760's to those being produced in the 21st century. Mr. Mullins regularly speaks before Toby Jug and Royal Doulton collectors meetings around the country, as well as other interested groups, regarding the history of Toby and Character Jugs. He is the co-author of two books with David C. Fastenau: *Toby & Character Jugs of the 20th Century and Their Makers* and *A Century of Royal Doulton Character and Toby Jugs*.

