

The Buttonmonger

T H E L I F E , A R T & H I S T O R Y O F T H E B U T T O N



Buttons, a farthing a pair.

Come, who will buy them of me?

They're round and sound and pretty,

And fit for girls of the city.

Come, who will buy them of me?

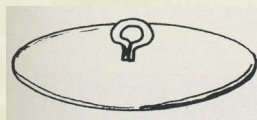
Buttons, a farthing a pair.

Mother Goose

SHANKS FOR THE MEMORIES!

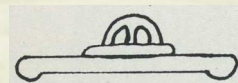
Most of the time, a button will not tell us much about when it was made. However, one way to determine the age of a button is by the type of shank that is attached to it. In this issue we explore various types of shanks and the time frames that they were produced.

Metal Button Shanks



Alpha Shank

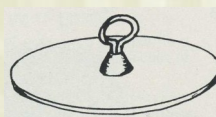
Most eighteenth century buttons made out of brass and copper used the Alpha shank.



Bird Cage Shank

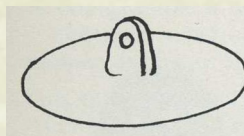
The Bird Cage shank appeared on French Military One piece flat brass buttons from 1780—

1800.



Cone Shank

Tombac, brass and other brittle alloys tended to use the Cone shank which was often cast and lathe-finished. Circa: 18th to 19th Century.



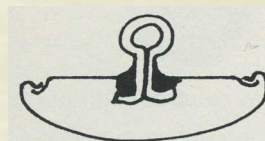
Drilled Peg Shape Shank

The Drilled Peg-Shaped shank was cast in one piece with the button. It was used with pewter, brass and some tombac buttons. Circa: 18th Century to mid 19th Century.



Hard White Shank

Hard White buttons “a name given to buttons made out of a certain grade of pewter” have a wire shank embedded in a blob of pewter. Circa: 1780s to 1850s.



Two Piece Sanders Shank

In the older Two Piece Sanders shank, solder was applied to the shank on both sides of the back plate. It usually filled the space between the bent wires forming the stem of the shank and ran into a hollow depression in the back around the

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METAL BUTTON SHANKS (CONT.)

base of the shank. This shank was used on the standard and golden aged gilt buttons between 1830–1850 and on higher quality American uniform buttons until the 1930s.

Omega Shanks were found on one piece gilt and plated brass and copper buttons from 1800



Omega Shank

to the mid 1900s.

The Three Piece Staff Shank is similar to the Two Piece Sanders shank, except on very inex-



Three Piece Staff Shank

pensive buttons where the backs were tinned steel and the shanks were a loosely inserted thin wire. Circa: 19th and early 20th century.

The Buttonmonger

Here's to Life, Happiness and the Pursuit of the Perfect Button



It is my goal to provide that best possible experience to all visitors to my site.

If you have a question, comment or a concern, please contact me via email: customerservice@thebuttonmonger.com or you can write to me at:

The Buttonmonger
P.O. Box 216
Chagrin Falls, Ohio 44022

I am just a person living in a small village... in a small cottage...with a lot of grand ideas. An artist, a poet, an eclectic collector of stuff and nonsense a quiet soul with flecks of cynicism and a sense of curiosity about the world around me. One wonder being the unbelievable detail of an antique button. These little works of art were beautiful as well as served a purpose. Worn as jewelry way back when, nowadays when popped is not even worthy to some to lean over and be rescued.

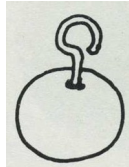
GLASS BUTTON SHANKS



Swirl Back



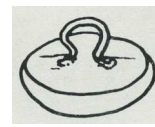
Four-way Box



Pig Tail



Brass Loop



Pushed-in



Modern Self

Like metal buttons, glass buttons have distinctive shanks that can give a clue to their age.

The original Swirl Back buttons were hand dipped and manufacturer from 1830–1850. Modern Swirl Back buttons are machine manufactured and have uniform swirls,

The small Four-way Box shank is characteristic of many Czechoslovakian glass buttons made between 1918 and 1938. This type of shank can also be found on pre World War I buttons

as well.

The Pig Tail shank was used on glass buttons and trims in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Brass Loop shank was used in the late 19th and early 20th century. They were also used on Czechoslovakian glass buttons and have very small loops with tiny shank plates.

The Pushed-in shank was found on many “charm string” glass buttons

Including clam broth, pained and paperbacks. An interesting feature to this shank is that one end of the shank is often not pushed into the glass. Circa: 1840's–1870's.

The Modern Self shank can be found on buttons made from the 1920's to date.

I hope that you enjoyed this brief review of the various shanks and that it will help you to be able to identify the age of some of your buttons.