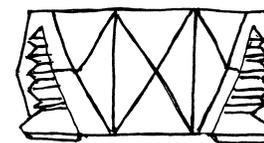
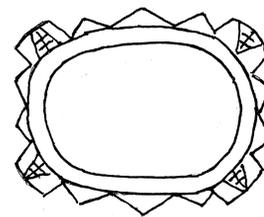


MOSSY COMMENTS - #3

One of the frustrating salts we see frequently is what we call the "Gothic" shape. The term is our own, coined because we didn't know how else to describe it. A picture of it is shown at the right - undoubtedly you have seen it or have one in your collection. It is master size, chunky with four very short feet, and the design is almost entirely large projecting diamonds. The colors we have seen include clear, blue, green and amber. We don't think it is very pretty, but it's rather common. Even worse, we can't find any clues as whether it is old or new, and whether it might be a repro.



Our first encounter with this one was at an elegant antique shop in New Hampshire on Memorial Day weekend in 1980. This is the era when we weren't spending more than \$10.00 for a salt for the collection. The lady assured us it was old, and said it dated back to the 1830's. We hesitated quite a while, but finally paid the \$15.00 she wanted and brought it home. Since then we have seen many more for half the price or less, and have been hunting for their origin ever since.

At an antique show last month we bought one that we hoped would shed some light on the situation. It was in milky blue, with gold trim on the sides and underneath. The gold was worn and tarnished, so there was no question about it being brand new. The bottom of the feet showed wear so we were sure it had been used - maybe as a paper clip dispenser, but used in any event. Since we were ready to call this an "old" one, maybe even older than we are, we hoped we could compare it to others and find a difference.

When we got it home we brought out three others like it in various colors and set out to compare them. Much to our frustration we could find no difference at all. The designs are exactly the same. There are a few dimensions where one was a tiny bit bigger than the others, but this could have happened if the glass sagged when the dish was made. We believe they all came from the same mold.

Trying to develop a little more information, we searched the Coddington book (printed in 1940) and the Clark W. Brown books (1937 and 1941). We couldn't find it pictured in either. It would be hard for both of them to miss it if it were around before-World War II. On the other hand, the gold decoration on the one we bought looks at least several decades old based on the amount of tarnish on it.

Our best guess now is that the salt was made in considerable quantity in the 1950's or 1960's. We don't know by whom, and we don't think the mold is being run currently. If you like it, get one for your collection but don't pay a high price for it. If you have any more input that would clarify the picture, we're anxious to hear from you.

It would be nice if there was a central file of manufacturers' catalogs so that dishes like this could be identified accurately. A little more information may surface in coming years, but most probably we will never find out the complete story about many of our salts. This doesn't say we won't be trying, and we hope that you are interested enough to keep trying too.