



KNOW YOUR ANTIQUES

By RALPH and TERRY KOVEL

Air fresheners of the 1800s

Air fresheners and incense are not a 20th century invention. Our ancestors were plagued by smells worse than ours: garbage, animals, spoiling food, and even temporary indoor storage of human waste because there were no flush toilets.

The odors were disguised by the burning of aromatic wood or pastilles. They were mixtures of aromatic wood, charcoal, spices such as cloves, and an easily ignited chemical.

It was believed that the vapors would kill germs, so sickrooms were always fumigated with burning pastilles. It is currently believed that lavender vapors can kill tuberculosis bacteria. Cinnamon vapors are said to kill typhoid, but it is doubtful that enough of the vapor was ever created by the burning process to be effective.

The pastille was burned in small ceramic holders often shaped like houses, fruits, or floral bouquets. The holder had an opening in the back for the pastille. The fumes of the lit pastille rose through the openings in the small house at the doors and chimney. Each pastille burned for several hours.

Many of these English pastille burners that were made in the Staffordshire district can still be found.

For your free copy of the Kovels' "Magic Refinishing Formula" leaflet, send a long, stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request for it to Ralph and Terry Kovel in care of this newspaper.

Q How old is the jigsaw puzzle?

A It is claimed that the first jigsaw puzzle was invented by John Spilsbury in England during the early 1700s. He called it a dissected map.

Mr. Spilsbury was a printer and he pasted his maps on wood panels and cut them into puzzle pieces.

It was not until the 1780s that the puzzle included pictures of anything but maps. They were considered a teaching device and the puzzles often featured history, nature, alphabets, and biblical scenes. The first American-made puzzles date sometime during the 1780s.

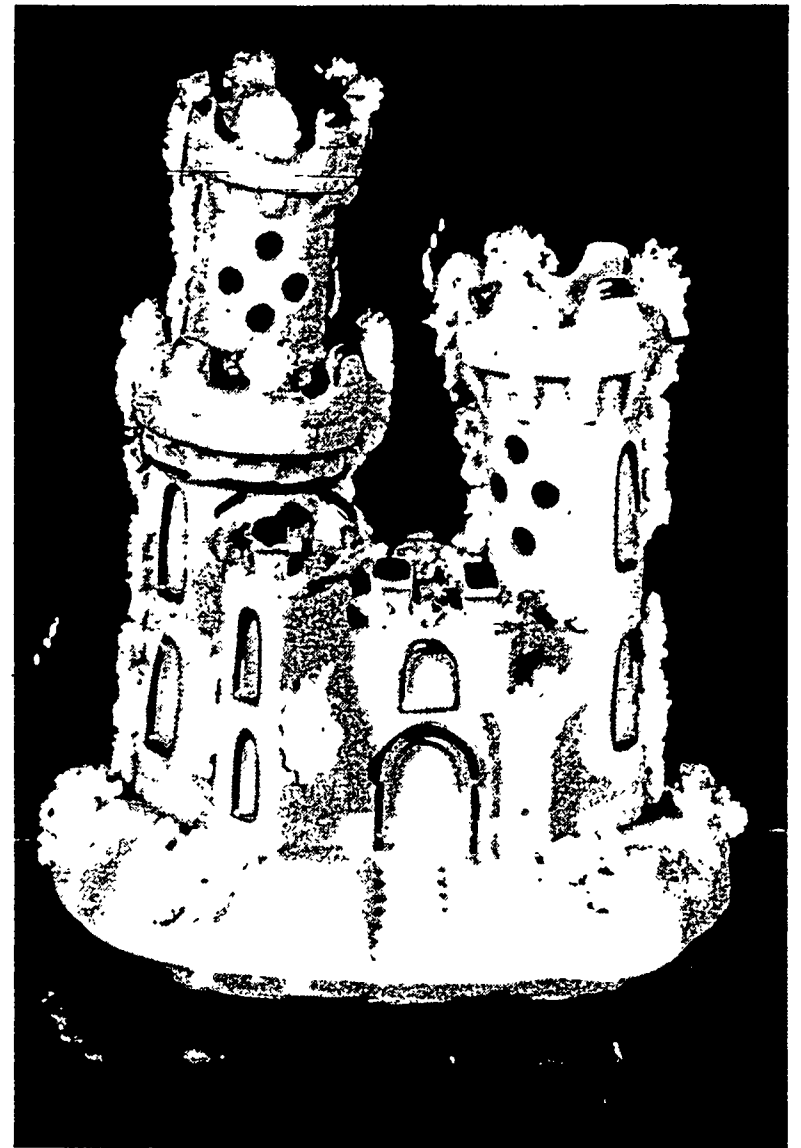
Q My vase is marked Pope-Gosser China. How old is it?

A Pope Gosser China Company worked in Coshocton, Ohio from 1902 to 1929 and from 1933 to 1958. Some of the most interesting Pope Gosser pieces have a rough brown finish with pictures of Indians as the decoration.

Q My "goofus glass" dish is dirty looking and almost tarnished. Can I clean it?

A Goofus glass is a pressed glass that was painted with bright colors and metallic paints. It was popular from about 1910 to 1920. The bronze, silver, or gold paint sometimes discolors through oxidation. It is almost impossible to restore the bright look, but sometimes a gentle cleaning with a silver polishing paste will help. When the paint is too discolored, collectors sometimes remove the paint completely. This, of course, lowers the value.

"The Collector's Complete Dictionary of American Antiques" by Frances Phipps (Doubleday, \$25) is the type of book needed in every serious reference library. The terms included cover Americana from 1640 to 1840. The average collector will miss the terms from 1840 to 1940 covering the collectibles of today.



SWEET-SMELLING SMOKE came from the turrets and holes in the turrets in this Staffordshire pastille burner. It was made in the mid-19th century.

Outdoor antiques fair Sunday

PEEKSKILL — One hundred exhibitors from all over the northeast will display wares at the fifth antiques fair and flea market at Beach Shopping Center, Route 6, Sunday.

The outdoor fair will be open to the public from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. All exhibits will be for sale and will include antiques, Americana, crafts and collectibles of every description.

Antiques will range from early furniture to blown and pattern glass and will include antique jewelry, primitives, crocks, stoneware, quilts, old dolls and toys, and early advertising items. Also on hand will be many craftsmen with displays such as African bead jewelry, hand-made wooden chests and other accessories, paintings and even terrariums.

The fair is under the management of Antique Décor Promotions of Mohegan Lake. Admission is free and there will be free parking and food available all day. Rain date is October 27. The Beach Shopping Center has entrances on both Route 6 and Route 202 and is easily accessible via the Taconic State Parkway and Route 9.

Ancient Greek technique to be shown

STAMFORD, Conn. — The ancient Greek technique, "encaustic" painting, will be demonstrated at Stamford Museum and Nature Center today (Saturday) from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. by Stamford artist, Joan Mary Rasmussen. The demonstration will be given at the Studio Building.

This will be the first in a series of demonstrations and other free events at the museum during the fall and winter.

Encaustic painting was a major technique in classical Greece and although no examples remain from the Hellenic period, it was

described by Pliny the Elder. The Fayoum mummy portraits are the best surviving examples. While there has been sporadic interest in modern times, the technique passed out of use in the 9th century.

The word "encaustic" implies a "burning in" of colors. In early times, a basket of hot coals was passed in front of the painting surface, today, the artist can use a propane torch to get the same effect. The color pigments are held in a binder of beeswax and the colors are manipulated in the molten state. The torch is applied directly to the surface in order

to fuse the colors which have been laid on with a brush or knife. Because the combination of beeswax and turpentine is volatile, Mrs. Rasmussen calls this a "seasonal medium" as she "burns in" out-of-doors.



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