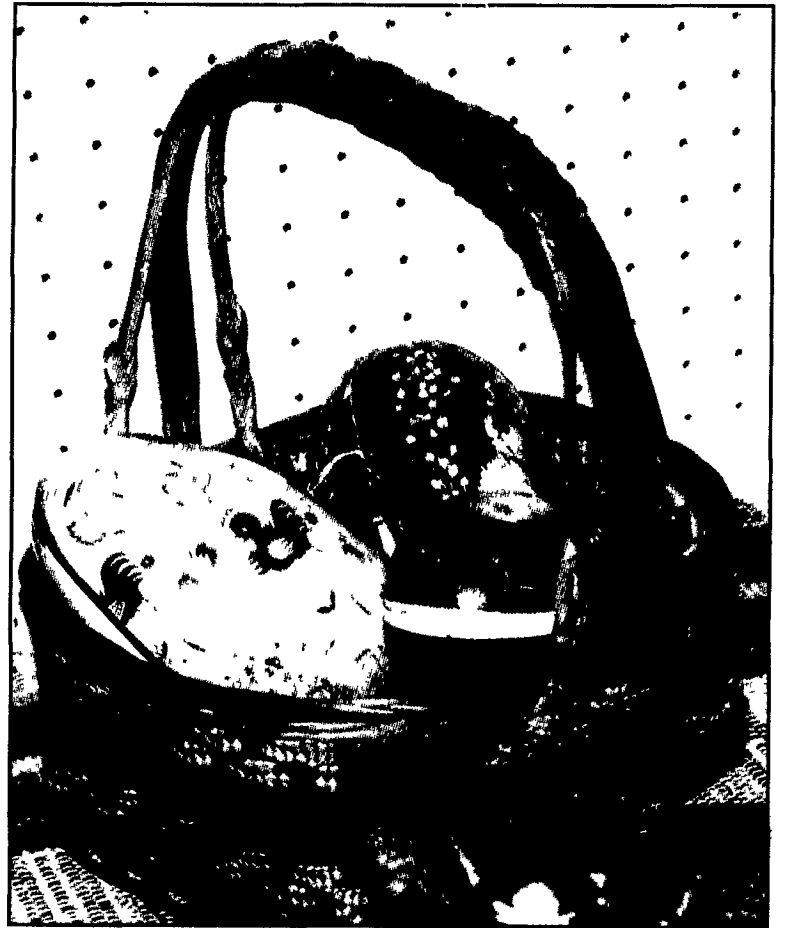


Lancaster Farming *Antiques Center*



Imagine a child's delight in finding this tin rabbit, which opens to hold candy in addition to the little cart, which could be filled with candy or decorated eggs. The tin rabbit was made in Germany, where similar pieces were common during the 1920s. Today it sells for \$295.



Papier-mache eggs are highly desirable and reflect the excellent craftsmanship of Germans, who often made holiday-related items. Although Americans and the Japanese also made papier-mache items, the quality is not as good. The two larger eggs are papier-mache eggs that open to hold treasures. The smaller egg is wax coated.

Treasures From Easters Past

ANNE GILBERT
Antique Detective

Easter items are highly collectible. A wide range of objects were made in materials such as glass, tin, cardboard and paper.

Tin and cardboard eggs and bunny figures, first made in the early 20th century, held candy. Some of the cardboard eggs are several feet in height. These days the figures can brighten kitchen decor year round.

Glass hen and egg dishes originally made in the 19th century were in colors as well as white and colorless glass. Reproductions can be found at antiques shops, shows and gift shops.

The covered hen/egg and bunny dishes were made in a variety of glass types in the mid-19th century, but have been reproduced ever since. However, the reproductions from the 1930s are also considered collectible.

There are many ways to test the glass hen and bunny dishes to be sure they aren't reproductions. In the case of milk glass, hold it up against the light. A thin, transparent (opalescent) line should follow the contour of the dish.

Another test for old milk glass is that the texture is less glossy than on the new pieces.

Beware of the brightly colored glass hen dishes made in Portugal in the 1970s. Unfortunately their paper labels on the bottoms have long since worn off.

Should you find a covered hen dish of glass marked "Vallerystahl," you have discovered a collectible French-made piece, dating between 1850 and 1939. The glass is grey in appearance.

In the mid 19th century bunny and hen dishes were also made in camphor glass. This is a cloudy, white glass that was pressed, blown, and then mold blown. It was made by many Midwestern glass manufacturers.

Among the best-known hen dishes are those made by Westmoireland in milk glass. The old pieces are heavier than the reproductions. The early pieces have a rough spot on the bottom that appears like a "C," a result of the molding process. The repro has the overlapping letters "WG."

There are also hen and rooster covered dishes in slag glass made originally in the 1880s. They can be recognized by their blending of white into color mixtures. They were also made in England at the same time. The English examples are trademarked either with an English registry mark or a peacock, which have also been reproduced.

Count your blessings if a family member decorated hollowed out eggs and turned them into egg trees. Or, if you had Slavic ancestors who fashioned painted, wood eggs.

Especially collective are the hollowed out real eggs decorated in the 1950s and 1960s, when there was a revival of home crafts. Keep your eye out at garage sales for the hollowed out, decorated eggs.

Glass eggs in a variety of sizes were painted and gilded in Victorian times. However, many originally plain milk glass eggs have been recently painted, gilded, and had decals applied to make them appear more valuable.

Americans were introduced to the wonders of Faberge eggs in 1985, when the first one, the Cuckoo egg, c.1900, was auctioned at Sotheby's. It sold for over \$1 million.

Jeweler to the czars, Carl Faberge designed hundreds of objects. But, he's best known for his elaborate Easter eggs. Their



Rabbits were often popular characters in children's books during the turn of the century into the 1930s. However, books about children are preferred over books on animals according to Maxine Baurer, Gilbertsville.

mystique has grown in an ongoing Easter egg hunt. Of some 56 eggs Faberge designed for the Russian royal family, some are still not accounted for. Also missing are many of the presentation eggs he made for a limited number of his wealthiest patrons. When they reappear at auction, they sometimes sell in the millions of dollars.

Largest prices in recent years were at a 1997 Christie's auction when the "Winter Egg" of rock crystal, commissioned by the nephew of Alfred Nobel, fetched \$5.6 million. The same year Sotheby's sold an imperial gift, the "Love Trophy" egg for almost \$3.2 million.

What makes the eggs so special?

The mystique of the Russian
(Turn to Page 30)

Decorating Tip Of The Week



Many old quilts are small in size compared to today's requirements for queen- and king-sized beds. If you'd like to display an antique quilt on a bed, but it doesn't fit — don't despair. Try this idea from Cindy Wegaman, Berks County. Place a bedspread on the bed and position the antique quilt diagonally across it.