



An Interesting Piece of Porcelain

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Image: R/S Porcelain Cracker Jar

I've always loved pretty porcelain although my knowledge of their origins is somewhat slim. A piece in the collection of the Gilford's Thompson-Ames Historical Society caught my eye and when I looked for the mark found it was one I'd never seen or heard about. So, being intrigued decided to try and find out about this porcelain marked RS Prussia.

The RS in RS Prussia is derived from its founder, Reinhold Schlegelmilch. His factory in Suhl, Germany enjoyed some success but it was the work of his two sons, Arnold and Ehrhard that would make the mark bearing his initials famous. As Ehrhard continued to operate the factory in Suhl, Arnold went on to found a second factory in nearby Tillowitz. These two operations produced the majority of their products for export beginning in 1892 up until the beginning of World War I.

This porcelain is known both for the complexity of its molds and for the beauty of the patterns, most of which were applied using floral transfers. [To my eyes this is the case with the cracker jar that caught my attention.]

Many pieces also bear some hand decoration, such as gold gilding or embellishments like thick enameling that gives the floral prints texture. A variety of glazes were applied at the RS factory. Depending on the particular finishing materials used pieces may bear a glossy, iridescent, luster or matte surface appearance.

From the time of founding up to 1892 little porcelain was exported to America from Reinhold's factory. Early in 1893 US wholesale firms began to import larger quantities of china tableware from Europe, and quite a large amount was from Reinhold's factory. Around 1905 the public taste began to change to china in simple shapes. This created a market for inexpensive china from Japan and other European factories.

One reference I used Collector's Encyclopedia of R. S. Prussia (fourth series) by Mary Frank Gaston has a fabulous number of color prints of various designs and pieces of this china. It also has many of the marks used by these companies. It even shows some fake marks that unscrupulous manufactures used. When I compared the picture of the mark I took of the piece in our collection to one of those depicted in the above referenced book I was appalled!! Why? Because it looks to me that



it appears under those listed as fake! Not being trained in any way about the making and marking of china I can only hope that my "old" eyes have missed something

important. In any case, regardless of its value or lack thereof, it is a lovely piece of china I never tire of admiring.

Gilford's Thompson-Ames Historical Society welcomes comments on, or suggestions for, articles. You can e-mail us at Thomames@metrocast.net and visit our web site at gilfordhistoricalsociety.org.