

## Know your antiques

# Old quillwork rarely survived

By RALPH and TERRY KOVEL

Ordinary materials were crafted into unusual, decorative home furnishings as far back as the 18 century. Quillwork is a craft form from an earlier day that is no longer made.

This type of craft was known as early as the 15th century, but the best examples are English from the late 19th century. Only a few American quillwork pieces are known. Many religious, middle-European 19th-century pieces were made.

Quillwork is a filigree paperwork. Small pieces of paper were tightly rolled until they resembled cigarettes. The end of each rolled paper, where the tobacco would show in a real cigarette, was placed so it could be seen. The n54 because the gravy dripped off the board. So small rolls were glued into frames or on sides of small boxes.

The rolls were adjusted to form mosaic-like patterns. Often gold or another color was added to make the paper edges



Quillwork decorates 18-century tea box

look more like metal filigree. Examples of quillwork are rare today. The perishable nature of the paper made it difficult to preserve.

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Q. My dishes are marked "Carter's Poole."

A. Jesse Carter started the Poole Pottery in Poole, Dorset, Great Britain in 1873. The firm made architectural ceramics and tablewares. After a variety of management changes and names, the Poole

Pottery Ltd. was started in 1963.

The mark "Carter's Poole" was used in a variety of forms from 1873 to 1921.

Q. How old is the dinner plate?

A. In medieval times the trencher was often thrown to the dogs or given to the poor after a meal. It was a square of bread on which meat was served.

The Normans used a square of wood under the square of bread at the tables of the wealthy by the 15th century. The wooden plate and the

bread were both called "trenchers."

When the custom of using bread subsided, the flat wooden trencher was unsatisfactory because the gravy dripped off the board. So someone decided to make a hollow in the trencher's center for the meat.

Pewter trenchers were first known during the 14th century in England. They were made for use in the homes of nobles. Silver dinner plates were used by the 17th century. One American colonist ordered a dozen silver plates from London in 1688.

Porcelain dishes were first made in the Orient, and pottery dishes were known in Europe at the same time.

Q. How was a fire-screen used?

A. When all the heat in a room came from the fireplace, it was

often tricky to avoid freezing or frying. If you sat too far from the fire, you were cold; if you were too near, the hot flames turned your face red. So a firescreen was used for protection from direct heat.

There are two basic types. The pole screen had a pole with a small screen that could be raised or lowered. The screens were often embroidered. The cheval screen was a square screen supported by two low legs.

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