



Kevin Milaeger

Milaeger's

American Ornaments--- Shiny Brite, Stencil, and Unsilvered

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Before World War II, virtually all glass ornaments sold in America were from Europe. We tend to think of the war as starting on December 7, 1941 but of course it started in Europe in 1939. Trade with Germany and other



American unsilvered

they were just colorful orbs. Other shapes that lent themselves to mass production followed. Bells, icicles, simple indents, and others. Once American involvement in the war began, things changed again. The war necessitated shortages of raw materials, and American ornament manufacturers were affected. For example, mercury was no longer available for the inside of the ornaments, so clear or transparent ornaments were the result. After the war, the designs continued to evolve, and American ornament companies thrived.

The most famous American ornament maker during the war and the years following was Shiny Brite. Based in New York/New Jersey, they quickly became the largest American ornament manufacturer and their ornaments are sought after today. Many of the ornament caps are stamped with the company name. The Shiny Brite company produced many ornaments with stripes, and there are as many color combinations as you can think of. There are different shapes and sizes, and some are indents. The Shiny Brite name still exists and ornaments are currently

European countries was disrupted, and non-essential products like Christmas ornaments were no longer exported.

American companies began mass producing ornaments, but they were not the delicate, hand-blown, glass figural ornaments that we were used to. In the beginning,



Shiny Brite 1

offered under that name.



stencil 1

We have a good selection of the new ornaments in our stores, along with the vintage ones.

Stencil ornaments lent themselves to mass production, so they became popular with American producers. Because of the manufacturing method, the ornaments needed to be smooth, so nearly all stencil ornament are perfect

spheres. Despite this limitation, there are plenty of design variations. Every year I find numerous examples that are new to me. Winter scenes, animals, snowmen, Santa Clauses, nursery rhymes, circus animals, Christmas greetings, and Christmas carols are among the most popular images.

With mercury being unavailable during the war, clear glass and colored glass were both very common. These are called unsilvered ornaments, and they are among my favorites. I like the idea of being able to see through

an ornament, on to the next ornament. Despite the lack of mercury that creates the mirror-like finish on pre-war ornaments, these unsilvered ornaments still have wonderful reflective qualities. You can judge for yourself if they appeal to you. Especially interesting are the unusual colors we sometimes find----aqua, lavender, yellow, orange---



European unsilvered

these are all hard to find but worth searching for since they add a new color dimension to the display. After the war, mercury was still scarce, and some European manufactures also made some unsilvered ornaments.

A few of you have asked about my own ornament collection. I thought it might be interesting to show something from my collection in future blogs. These won't be for sale, but you still might enjoy seeing them. Today's



**Kevin's ornament
American "bumpy"**

example is an American made ornament with a nubby exterior. These are usually known as "bumpy" ornaments and there are European examples, too. American ornaments are usually heavier than those from Europe, and another difference is the width of the cap--- American ornaments are almost always wider. This ornament is about 2.5" tall and has a very unusual teal color. The indentation is star-shaped, also uncommon. I hope you like it as much as I do. That was fun---- reminds me of "Show and Tell" like we had back in grade school.

Scroll down for more and larger images. Please [email me](#) if you have any questions or comments. If you are interested in

purchasing ornaments pictured in this blog, please contact Kelly, who

handles mail order sales, at 262.693.2040 x101 or info@milaegers.com.



Shiny Brite 1



Shiny Brite 2



stencil 1



stencil 2



American unsilvered



European unsilvered



Kevin's ornament---American "bumpy"