

All-American Vintage Ornaments



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November 17th, 2023

America has produced Christmas ornaments for many years, but the really significant production began during World War II. European production had been interrupted and trade with Germany had been halted, so enterprising Americans began production on a massive scale to meet the demand. During the war there were shortages of many products. One was silver nitrate, which was used to coat the inside of glass ornaments, prior to painting the exterior. With no “silvering,” as its called, the ornaments were transparent. The glass was usually colored, and then added exterior paint such as striping, but much of the ornament was transparent. Collectors today, myself included, find these “unsilvered” ornaments particularly desirable. Because you can see through them, they give the tree more depth. You can see through to the next ornament, and even to the one after that. Also, light flows through the tree, for an overall brighter effect. These transparent ornaments come in many colors, and many different exterior painting patterns. At some point, manufacturers were looking for additional glitz, so they inserted a twig of tinsel into the ornament. Collectors prize these as well. We currently have a large selection of unsilvered ornaments.



Unsilvered American



**Unsilvered American
Tinsel**



Assorted Unsilvered



Smaller American

Another American invention was the stenciled ornament. Because of the high volume, American manufacturers found it was difficult to find enough artisans to hand paint all the ornaments, so they turned to stencil designs. These are still being produced today. There are many different designs, and we find new ones every year. The most common are winter scenes, words such as the title of a Christmas song or greeting, or figures such as Santa Claus, snowmen, angels,

and many others. We also see circus animals, trains, stars, snowflakes, nativity scenes and many more. Often I hear customers say something about how they had forgotten about these ornaments, but seeing them brings back memories.



Large Stenciled



Medium Stenciled

Shiny Brite is probably the best known American manufacturer from the post WWII era. The company name is now owned by another manufacturer, and they are still producing ornaments. These new Shiny Brite are manufactured in China, and they look fantastic. The vintage Shiny Brites come in many sizes and shapes and are sought after by many collectors. Often the name Shiny Brite is stamped on the ornament cap, but not always. There are so many different combinations of shapes and colors that the variety seems limitless, and we regularly find Shiny Brite styles that are new to us. We hope you find something interesting, too.



Shiny Brites

Please email me (kevin@milaegers.com) with your questions and comments!