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Friday, 10/26/07

## Know your stuff: Corn King and Queen pieces among favorite

Among the collectibles I appraised this week in McEwen, Tenn., were these "corn" pattern Shawnee dinnerware items.

In 1937, amid the rolling hills of Zanesville, Ohio, Shawnee Pottery began production of whimsical pottery dinnerware, flowerpots, cookie jars and lamps. Their most successful and imitated dinnerware pattern, called Corn King, was made from 1946 to 1954. It was often marked with either an indented "USA" or a paper label. Many pieces have no mark at all.



[enlarge](#) 

Davenport's client had a nice grouping of pieces made by Vallona Starr Pottery Co. of California. They manufactured from 1930 to 1953 and their corn pattern pieces sell from \$3 to \$12. (SUBMITTED)

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As you might imagine, this scenario can be confusing for collectors trying to determine the decade their "corn" was

made. The company developed Corn Queen, with darker green foliage and light yellow kernels, in 1954. The Queen pattern was made until 1961, when the company closed. True collectors can be quite adamant about the corn's hue. The earliest Corn King is the most expensive — up to \$200 for some serving pieces.

Corn Queen sells in the \$30-\$65 range. Shawnee items are usually glazed inside and out.

Only the ring or foot of the base is unglazed. Glaze is what gives pottery and porcelain a shiny finish.

The corn pattern was copied by many companies. My client in McEwen had a nice grouping of pieces made by Vallona Starr Pottery Co. of California. They manufactured from 1930 to 1953, making colorful and quirky patterned items. Their corn pattern pieces sell from \$3 to \$12 and had a darker clay and thicker glaze than Shawnee corn. I predict Vallona Starr items will increase in value because many (not the corn pieces) were produced in deep red and orange colors, which are so popular in current decorative arts magazines. Pottery of all types is a hot seller right now. Both Vallona Starr and Shawnee marked their later corn pieces with a number imprinted into the base.

Shawnee also produced the sweetest little salt and pepper shakers. This set of late 1940s kittens might sell for \$30 in a show. Salt and pepper shakers were often made as a match to Shawnee's cookie jars. Although most pottery cookie containers sell for around \$100, some can cost up to \$500. Because so many of the cookie jars have been reproduced, many buyers have become frustrated and have chosen something else to collect. The new examples are smaller in both scale and weight.

I'm fortunate when I appraise an estate because I can usually detect a misty eye when my clients tell of sneaking cookies from Granny's cookie jar . . . thus dating the piece to the '40s.



[enlarge](#)  
 This set of late 1940s kitten salt and pepper shakers was made by Shawnee Pottery of Ohio. (SUBMITTED)

Contact Connie Sue Davenport with questions about your antiques and collectibles, and we'll discuss them here. Send to [curios@conniesueinc.com](mailto:curios@conniesueinc.com) or by mail in care of Williamson A.M.

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