

Donation of the Month

Cut Glass Dresser Box



Cut Glass Dresser Box
Catalog #: 1987.12.279
Donor: Estate of Vera Key

This oval-shaped cut glass dresser box has a metal rim and hinged lid and would have been used for holding small items such as hairpins.

This box may once have been part of a larger dresser set which often included a matching powder jar, hair receiver, and cologne bottles. Cut glass makers often used combinations of standard motifs in the glass. Manufacturers gave pattern names to certain combinations of motifs. The dresser box is cut in a pattern of repeating pinwheel designs which can be seen on the lid and around the base.

In the mid-1800s the American glass industry began developing its own national style distinct from that of Europe. American companies that produced exquisite cut glass won acclaim at the 1899 World Exposition in Paris and produced popular exhibits at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The years between 1876 and 1916 are called the American Brilliant Cut Glass period because of the popularity of American cut glass during that time.

This dresser box came from the home of Vera Key. Born at War Eagle on September 16, 1893, Vera Key grew up to become a Rogers civic leader. Key first moved to Rogers with her family in 1897. She graduated from the Rogers Public Schools in 1908 and went on to St. Louis to train as a nurse. Following a stint in the Army Nurses Corps in France during World War I, she returned to Rogers. She was one of the founders of the Benton County Historical Society and later served as the first chair of the Rogers Historical Museum Commission. Miss Key had a large collection of glass objects, many of which were cut glass. Among her collection of cut glass donated to the museum are a mayonnaise set, a celery dish, ice cream trays, bowls, knife rests, vases, and a dresser tray.

Credits

"A Brief History of American Brilliant Cut Glass," The American Cut Glass Association; Jane Shadel Spillman, "Glass Bottles, Lamps, & Other Objects," The Knopf Collectors' Guides to American Antiques Glass Volume 1 (1982) and "Glass Tableware, Bowls, & Vases," The Knopf Collectors' Guides to American Antiques Glass Volume 2 (1983); Jo Evers, Evers' Standard Cut Glass Value Guide (1995); Vera Key file; Rogers Historical Museum Research Library.