



OBJECT ID	2011.7.173
OBJECT NAME	Dish
OBJECT COLLECTION	Alex's Candy Shop (is part of)
DATE CREATED	1920 – 1940
MATERIAL	Ceramic
OBJECT ENTITIES	Rassogianis/Franks families, By (owned by) Franks, Rassogianis; (is related to)

#### OBJECT DESCRIPTION

This white plate is smaller and circular. It is completely plain with no design except for the maker's notation on the back. This reads "Cook China Co. Trenton, N.J." and is merely an indentation in the center of the plate on the backside, and there is no color in the lines. The finish is a shiny white.

Due to age and storage there are discolorations and wear on the plates. The top part of the outer rim on this one has less finish and therefore is not as smooth as other parts of the item. It is a little darker in color and is a little textured in certain parts. There are other discolorations closer to the center of this plate and are circular in nature. they are a very faint tan color.

The bottom also shows some wear. There are raised portions at various places on the lip that curves up. They are small but are noticeable. On the very outside of the underside there is a textured spot that is orange in color and has a more grainy feel as opposed to the existing finish of the plate. The supporting rim also has discoloration and texture due to use wearing away the finish.

#### ORIGIN

Paulina Franks' grandfather, John Rassogianis, came to Chicago in the 1890s. He began his life in the new city by peddling fruits and later, with the help of his sons Alex and George, would open a candy store. In the 1920s Paulina Franks' father Constantine became a part of the family business and the store was able to prosper. When the second business closed Paulina Rassogianis chose to hold as many of the candy store's items as possible and, later, donate them to the National Hellenic Museum.

The Rassogianis family began their candy business in Chicago proper, working out of their own shop named "St. Louis Ice Cream Parlor." Eventually, the shop was closed and the Rassogianis' chose to continue their candy store venture in Berwyn, Illinois. The new shop they chose to open was named Alex's Sweet Shop.

Paulina Franks' father was a key contributor to the success of the Rassogianis candy stores. While Constantine Rassogianis was a noteworthy entrepreneur, he also had many other accomplishments. Among these was his four years of involvement in the Greek national military during World War I wherein he obtained the rank of sergeant. Also, he was a published author and poet, an experienced mandolin player, a church officer and had extensive knowledge of psalti.

Trenton, New Jersey, where the mark on the back of the plate indicates it was made, is responsible for the introduction of wide scale production of white graniteware. This product enabled American potters to compete successfully with foreign producers due to the low cost to make and easy marketability. The production of sanitary ware originated in Trenton and greatly assisted the growth of the American pottery industry overall. Trenton also pioneered the

development of art porcelain through the introduction in 1882 of “Belleek” china. Using techniques developed at the Irish Belleek works, Trenton became the base for high quality art porcelains.

Charles H. Cook purchased the Ott & Brewer Pottery in 1894, to start the company and they made many types of porcelain through their years. Unfortunately the Cook company closed during the Great Depression. Although this plate is quite plain they were known for Nipur Ware and Metalline Ware which were more detailed, intricate, and sought after than the basic everyday ceramics.

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#### CITATION

Dish, 1920 – 1940, Alex's Candy Shop, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://collections.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 05/06/24.

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