...maybe it's just me, or the dozens of standard and super motor points I have ... I've noticed in the past, even after cleaning them very well, sometimes I get flaky continuity readings when setting my point timing on an engine. For the most part, I can take any set of points I have out of the sealed package, and put a continuity meter across them, or even contacting directly to the face of one of the points contacts, and there is ZILCH continuity, which might be expected since you are supposed to solvent clean the preservative wax off them prior to use. If I clean them with various cleaners, anyone of these... acetone, chlorinated brake cleaner, alcohol, mineral spirits.... sometimes they work then, but not always ... then if I polish them using one of those rubber type Dremel polishing bits, they usually work well enough to set the timing on an engine. However, yesterday, I looked even closer, after doing all this cleaning and polishing, I took the continuity probe and slid it around the face of each of the points contacts, applying even pressure as I moved the probe .... half of the point contacts were rock solid for resistance and continuity, the other half, the continuity audible tone was cutting in and out depending where I was on the surface of the points contact. On the surface of those problem contacts, there was what appeared to be a stain, hardly even visible. My initial thought was, it must be oxidation or tarnishing of the contact surface (maybe these are silver plated?). So, I looked online for a home-brew chemistry method of removing this STUFF! I tried this and it worked incredibly well .... I filled a glass about 1/4 full, after heating the water for 1min in the microwave oven, I added several tsps of salt, and several tsps of baking soda, then about 4 sq-in of shredded Aluminum foil, stirred it up and dropped the McCulloch points in (there must be enough foil in there for the points to contact it). 15mins later, I took the points out, and dropped them in some heated distilled water, to remove salt and baking soda (leaving any trace of that behind cause corrosion). Visually, the stains on the contact points surface were GONE! and the passing the continuity probe over the surface gave a rock solid reading. I repeated this on several sets of points, same results. Basically in layman terms, the tarnish is moved from the points to the Aluminum foil, reversing the process that caused the tarnishing.

I would imagine though, that that the voltage across the points under normal operation is high enough that the observed stains on the points contact surface would not affect ignition performance, just make setting the timing a little more of a challenge, depending on the sensitivity of the continuity device one is using.

The cleaning method I tried might save a lot of time cleaning and polishing up these old points. Next I will try the chemistry method on a set of points right out of the package ... because I'm suspecting that the supposed preservative wax just isn't there anymore after these things sit around for 30-40 years! ... it may only be oxidation / tarnish that needs to be cleaned off. I'm report my findings later....