

Reproductions: Naughty or Nice?

Article from NMGCS publication *Opaque News*, March 1995, pages 7 - 11
 Reprint with friendly agreement of Mr. Frank Chiarenza. Many thanks!

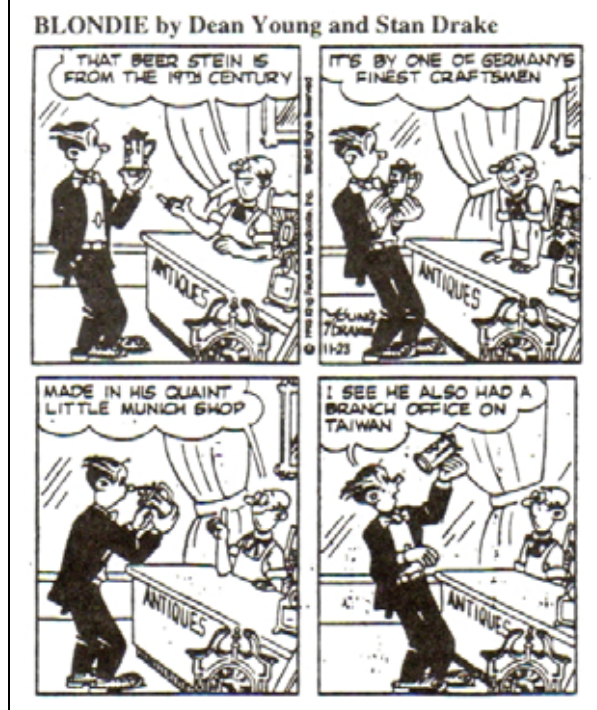
Frank Chiarenza, September 2005: Hello Siegmar,

I completely agree with you that the outright FAKES are usually done of high priced originals by famous art glass artists, and not nearly as often as for much less expensive, mass-produced pressed moulded glass. And you examples of the state approved, or even state sponsored or initiated, creation of fake marks and paper labels is the very worst example of such abuse.

Many years ago, I wrote an article on the subject of Reproductions which was published in the March 1995 issue of *Opaque News* (pages 7-11). Perhaps you may have seen it? I do not think you will find very much of interest there, especially because the examples I discussed were mainly of American made glass. If you care to read it, you may be able to download the attachment on this email.

Very kind regards, Frank

Abb. 2005-4/xxx
 Picture from NMGCS publication *Opaque News*, March 1995, page 7:
 „That beer stein is from the 19th century ... it's by one of Germany's finest craftsmen ... made in his quaint little Munich shop!“
 „I see he had also a branch office in Taiwan!“



In the December issue of *Opaque News*, Helen Liveten's "Letter from the President" posed the question "What is your definition of a reproduction?" and she invited all members to express their views. Not one to be daunted by thorny questions, I decided to give it a try. For what

they may be worth, here are some thoughts on the matter.

A standard dictionary definition that "a reproduction is anything copied or recreated" is of course too general. A more detailed definition covering every possible "anything" reproduced in the range of human existence and experience would be near impossible and beyond our scope of inquiry, anyway. We are interested only in reproductions of Artistic Creations, and within that broad area, our definition is focused still further on a single concern; namely **opaque objects formed from press-molded glass**.

The simple question is, what precisely do we mean when we say "This piece of milk glass is a reproduction?" Answering that question, however, is far from simple.

Multiple Kinds of "Reproductions"

Countless articles, a whole chapter in **Belknap**, entire magazines, and even full length books like **Ruth Webb Lee's**, have addressed this issue, and for good reason. Reproductions are the bane of all collectors of antiques, especially when copies of "originals" are produced with the willful intention to deceive the public. Let's start with Ruth Webb Lee's well-known and often quoted definition:

"A reproduction becomes a fake when it is sold as a genuine antique" (Antique Fakes & Reproductions, p. 6).

This sentence defines "Reproduction" strictly in the context of a monetary transaction: the sale of a fraudulent object as "genuine", either by those who made the "fake" or dealers who knowingly sell it as the "real thing." While this is a good definition of fake, it really isn't very useful unless we are mind readers and can tell whether manufacturers or dealers purposely intend to cheat us. Occasionally, however, their deliberate intention to bamboozle the public is shamelessly obvious, as seen in the amusing "Blondie" cartoon.

For milk glass collectors, **an outrageous example of intentional deception is the animal covered dishes made in Taiwan, some of which were impressed with the Heisey "H" in diamond mark**. Many examples of these fakes are illustrated on pages 106-111 of *Grist's Covered Animal Dishes* (1988). Even though the mark itself, no less than the crude quality of the glass and the mold from which it was pressed, was a dead giveaway, beginning collectors might easily be duped by these fake-artists - these "ingenious rascals," as Lee so aptly calls them.

Because the **Taiwan imports** (many of which are rip-offs of French originals, as we know) could not possibly be “reproductions” of non-existent Heisey originals, we can be sure the maker intended to swindle gullible collectors by exploiting the highly respected name of Heisey. This is a consummate example of Lee's definition of a Fake, unworthy of even being included among objects that are legitimately made, identified and sold to the public as “Reproductions.” A court action eventually put a stop to this abuse of the Heisey logo, but the fakes themselves continue to be made.

Abb. 2004-4/269
 „Cow on Tub Covered Dish“
 opaque blue glass, H xxx cm, D xxx cm
 collection Carmony
bottom of base marked „H inside a diamond“ (Heisey) maker unknown, Reproduction Taiwan
 from Opaque News 2004-9, p. 5
 „Neil's Folly, the Asian-made cow-on-tub dish with the bogus Heisey mark on the bottom of its base.“

I.a. Regis and Mary Ferson, Yesterday's Milk Glass Today, Seite 31, Number 110, „Cow on Tub Covered Dish“

Frank Chiarenza's answer to Neil Carmony: „The Cow on Tub that is pictured in Ferson (#110) dates back to the early 1900s and was made in Germany by the **Gebruder von Streit Glassworks**. It was originally made in opaque white, opaque blue and clear crystal. I am sorry to tell You that the cow on tub you have is an Asian reproduction that has been around for about a dozen years or so. The mark that you find on the bottom of the tub base (an H inside a diamond) is an outright fake intended to deceive people into thinking it is an American product made by the **Heisey Glass Company**, whose trademark is in fact an H inside a diamond. The fakes have been found in white, blue (like yours), purple slag, clear, and in a depression glass type pink color.“



Although Lee's definition handily defines a “fake” it does not grapple with the more general question of **“honest” reproductions**, if we may so call them. Our problem, almost unique to the production of pressed glass, is how to regard an object that is essentially “new glass” produced from “old molds.” In such cases, which component should take precedence in defining the object, the newness of the glass or the antiquity of the mold? Some people have argued that common sense tells us if the glass is new, then it doesn't matter that the mold from which the glass was pressed is old; therefore, the object itself is not original, not “antique” of course, and must be considered a reproduction.

Abb. 2004-3/190
 „Cow on Tub Covered Dish“ lying on a wooden wash tub
 clear pressed glass, base H 5,5 cm, L 13,5 cm, B 10,1 cm,
 cover H 6,4 cm, L 11,4 cm, B 8,6 cm
 no signature
 collection Geiselberger PG-782
 also collection Fehr, clear pressed glass
 also collection Haanstra, clear pressed glass
 Gebrüder von Streit, Hosena-Hohenbocka / Berlin, ca. 1900
 s. MB Streit 1913, Tafel 15, Nr. 1518, Kuhdose oval



Abb. 2004-4/271
 „Cow on Tub Covered Dish“ lying on a wooden wash tub
 Gebrüder von Streit, Hosena-Hohenbocka / Berlin um 1900
 MB Streit 1913, Tafel 15, Nr. 1518, Kuhdose oval
 collection Feistner



Others, however, have taken an opposite point of view. Unlike the out-and-out “fakes” made from newly cast molds, as are the Taiwan pieces alluded to above, new glass pressed from authentic old molds are more difficult to deal with. Consider, for example, the account of **Belknap's conversation with John Kemple, in the 1940s, as it relates to this question:**

I asked Mr. Kemple if he planned to mark his glass so that it could be distinguished from antique pieces. He said, "No", and gave his reason: "since his glass was made from original molds created prior to 1890, the pieces were not reproductions. If he were to put his name on the products, people would consider them modern pieces and it would curtail sales" (Belknap, p. 270)

Kemple's argument that his pieces were not "reproductions" because he used the original old molds might gain support from some people, but I am sure Ruth Webb Lee would have raised both eyebrows upon hearing his financial reason for not marking his pieces. To be fair to Kemple, however, we know that he subsequently did affix his company's paper label to his products; others, like the large animal covered dishes, were marked with a "K" in a circle, or a circle alone. Perhaps Belknap's diplomatic suggestion that Kemple might at the very least mark his pieces with the words "Produced from the original molds" explains the paper label found in some of Kemple's reproductions of the **McKee** animal covered dishes, which reads: "SPLIT-RIB BASE / Original Molds / Jeannette -1890."

During the same period, Belknap also urged the Westmoreland Glass Company to mark its reproductions. While there is still some debate over the precise date when the WG logo was introduced, we find the following statement in a 1952 Westmoreland catalog:

"Westmoreland's Handmade Milk Glass Reproductions are fully identified as reproductions, and are offered to the public through established retail outlets as such. Some are from very old molds which have been in use in Grapeville for many years" (p. 3).

It is worth noting, I think, that **Westmoreland**, unlike Kemple, actually did use many of its own original old molds, retired for many years and later resurrected to press new pieces. These new pressings should indeed be called precisely what the company said they were: "**Authentic Reproductions**." In fact, I would even suggest that whenever new pieces are made by the original company using their own old molds, these might better be called **REISSUES rather than reproductions**.

An exception should probably be made, however, for pieces produced in "new" colors. But where the pattern and form itself are concerned, a company's own molds put in storage and later brought back into production should be considered reissues. **If one company's molds are later acquired and used by another company, however, these pieces should be called reproductions.**

For example, in the case of **Westmoreland** itself, its copies of original Atterbury or Challinor, Taylor pieces, faithful as they often are to the originals, are not reissues but reproductions, no matter whether Westmoreland had acquired and used the actual molds of another companies.

To pursue this point a bit further, as most collectors know, many of the original **Westmoreland** molds were purchased at auction by a number of glass companies, as well as jobbers, when the plant was closed in 1984. Some of those who acquired these molds, such as **Fenton** and the **Plum Glass Company**, have a laudable policy of removing the WG logos, and replacing them with the new owners' trademarks. Others, however, often retain the WG logo while continuing to press new pieces from the original molds. Are they "reissues" or "repro-ductions"? Simply by the fact that they were made after 1984 and therefore not actually produced by the Westmoreland Glass Company, the answer must be "They are reproductions, not reissues."

Often, only differences in the colors (when known not to have been made by Westmoreland) are the only clue as to whether a piece still bearing a Westmoreland trademark is an actual Westmoreland reissue, or a post-1984 reproduction by some other glasshouse.

A well-known, but by no means the only, distributor of new pressings from original Westmoreland molds is **Wholesale Glass Dealers, Inc.**, in Port Vue, PA. The owners, Helen and Phil **Rosso**, maintain a large Westmoreland Glass museum, many archival photographs and records, and a great number of molds. From time to time, they engage various glass manufacturers to produce quantities of pieces for them. Many of the pieces are of high quality and collectible in their own right. The Rossos proudly advertise their pieces as "Made in the U.S.A." No doubt, they are understandably concerned about competition from Taiwan and other foreign imports.

But this assurance of U.S.A. manufacture is somewhat disingenuous. Many serious collectors of Westmoreland glass are just as understandably concerned about new pieces coming into the market still bearing one or another of the WG logos, a company which has been defunct for more than a decade. They would wish the WG logos were either removed or replaced by the new owners' own trademark so that these new pieces could not be mistaken for products actually produced by and in the original Westmoreland glass factory.

The lack of makers' marks on so much of the older glass has long been a source of frustration for researchers. Even more disturbing nowadays, however, is to find new glass deceptively carrying, for example, the WG logos, obscuring not only its recentness but its current manufacturer. These may not be "fakes," as we have called the Taiwan pieces with Heisey marks, but they are **not entirely honest reproductions either**.

Is this "dubious" practice, for want of a better word, defensible? One suspects the Rossos, who are not actually makers of glass, defend their practice by relying on the same arguments used by Kemple in his conversation with Belknap, quoted above. It may be hair-splitting, but where purely financial reasons are concerned, one tends to find Kemple's argument, as a hands-on, struggling glassmaker, more defensible, and certainly more sympathetic, than does the same argument when advanced by a jobber and distributor. At

least, Kemple - to his great credit - never produced dishonest reproductions of the McKee animals by marking them with the McKee signature. Would that others, glassmakers and jobbers alike, took the same care to avoid misleading the unwary collector.

The Need for More Precise Terminology

I believe even the few examples given here are enough to reveal how ambiguous the word "Reproduction" is. It covers an infinite variety of products, some naughty and some nice. Other examples will occur to you, of course, but in general I tend to view "**COPIES**" - remember, we are speaking strictly of press-molded milk glass - as falling into one or another of the following categories:

(1) REISSUES: I put these into my **NICE** column.

They are new pieces made from old molds by the original creators, owners, and glassmakers. Any glass companies that bring out of storage their own, original molds, should be said to reissue, rather than "reproduce" those objects. Westmoreland's old "Specialty" pieces, for example, which they produced on and off over many years, are a good example. Bear in mind, however, that later reissues even when made by the original company cannot be considered and certainly should not be sold as "antiques," of course.

(2) REPRODUCTIONS: Under this heading, most are **NICE**, but some come close to being **NAUGHTY**.

Opinions differ, of course, but new pieces by one company pressed from old molds by a different company I consider reproductions; others, I know, have called such pieces "reissues" (such as **Imperial** pieces from **Heisey** molds). The same could be said of **Kemple's** copies of the **McKee** animals. If we can trust him to be truthful in stating he used the original molds. Because close comparison of the Kemple issues reveals differences, such as the wide rim on the underside of the covers and the flare of the split rib base, we probably should assume, at the very least, some reworking of the McKee molds. Other examples include **Westmoreland's**, or **Imperial's** or **Fenton's**, or other companies' pressings from old molds when those molds are known to have been acquired from other, usually defunct, glass factories.

Reproductions of this sort can be either **honest** or **dishonest**. To be honest, the new pieces should be unmarked, or if marked, they should carry the new owner's logo. If new owners continue to use the original owners' marks, the pieces are at best suspicious, at worst just a hair's breath from being out-and-out fakes.

(3) RECREATIONS or REPLICAS: These for the most part, I consider to be if not exactly **nice**, at least **not necessarily offensive**.

They are new pieces pressed from new molds that are modeled after or cast from original glass pieces, and they are neither marked nor sold with the intention of deceiving the public. For example: **Westmoreland's** Robin on Pedestal base; **Imperial's** Beehive honey dish; **Jeannette's** Grapes and Vine covered candy, and many other pieces known to be of **French derivation**. Close

inspection of these kinds of copies often reveals they were not pressed from the original molds, but rather newly cast molds. If Kemple had not maintained he was using original McKee molds, his pieces, which I have called "reproductions," would instead fall into this category of "replicas." Such pieces, when they are not fraudulently marked as to their true makers, pose no problem for collectors.

(4) FAKES or FORGERIES: No other words for these, but **Naughty, Naughty**.

They are products designed to hoodwink the gullible and blatantly employ every means to deceive. The worst sort carry labels or logos that replicate, sometimes only slightly altered, the original makers' marks. The Taiwan-Heisey forgery is an example of the most egregious kind of fake. The only "nice" thing about fakes is that usually the **quality of the glass is so inferior and the pieces so crudely pressed** that an experienced eye can spot them without too much difficulty.

We milk glass collectors are not alone in having to guard against such deception. With increased technology for mass production, we are entering a time in history when I fear we are being inundated with fakes of all kinds from all over the world. Recently, I read about German manufacturers of white-bearded dwarf clay figures, popular as lawn and garden ornaments, obtaining a court order against Polish firms exporting tens of thousands of fake copies made in plaster and plastic. Border guards have been posted to search Polish trucks and cars to apprehend the charlatans.

A Recent Troublesome Example

With these categories of types of reproductions in mind, let's consider which of the definitions best applies to a very recent offering mentioned by Barbara Scott in this issue's "Reproduction Alert" notice. It is a 5½" covered dish with a recumbent **Lion atop a Wide Rib base**, available in opaque white and in marbled red/orange/white from **Rosso's Wholesale Glass Dealers**, Inc. Collectors are aware that the original of this Lion set on a Split Rib base (Ferson-64) was made in the early 1890s by the **McKee** and Brothers Glass Factory.

John **Kemple** tells us that in the 1940s or thereabouts, he acquired many of the **McKee** molds, including some of the 5½" animal dishes on split rib bases, and reproduced a few. It is doubtful that Kemple had the Lion mold; in any case, if he did, he apparently chose not to use it. The **Westmoreland** Glass Company, however, did produce a version of the McKee Lion top, either as a reproduction (from the original mold) or a recreation (from a new casting), and sold them married to their own traditional Wide Rib base.

Because the Westmoreland Lion top fits only very imperfectly on a split rib McKee base, with excessive play from side to side, it would appear that Westmoreland either modified the original McKee mold or more likely created a new mold from a casting. An original signed **McKee** Lion top is too wide to fit on any of the older Westmoreland wide rib bases, although

it can just barely squeeze onto the recent wide rib base that is issued with the **Rosso** Lion top.

Now, with the McKee Lion serving as the original, it is difficult to decide what we should call the Westmoreland version and even more troublesome to know what to call the new Rosso piece. If **Kemple** had made the Lion covered dish, it would no doubt have been produced like his other McKee animals, and we would know exactly how to name it. By our definition, it should be considered an honest reproduction; that is, new glass by one company pressed from an original (or slightly reworked) mold or another company without imprinting the original company's signature or logo. When sold with markings or paper labels actually stating they are reproductions, we witness the highest ethical standards and wish they were mandated by law.

What "category" best applies to the earlier, circa 1950-1960s, **Westmoreland** copy of the McKee Lion is a bit more complicated. If we knew for certain that Westmoreland used the original McKee mold, we would call the Lion top a reproduction, and an honest one, by the same standards applied above to Kemple. If it was made from a new mold, cast from a McKee original, we should call it a re-creation or replica. Its marriage to a wide rib base, however, makes the entire covered dish an anomaly. But for that very reason, the Westmoreland version does not deceive anyone into mistaking it for an original McKee; therefore, it should not be called a "fake."

As for the current **Rosso** offering, made by an unnamed glass company, it too is not a "fake," but I believe we would have to consider it a less-than-honest reproduction of Westmoreland. Jim Slater reminds us that Rosso issued it once before (in 1987), but in cobalt, not milk glass. The Lion top is undoubtedly pressed from a Westmoreland mold acquired by Rosso, with perhaps some fixing up or reworking. Because the Rosso wide rib base continues to carry one of the late Westmoreland logos (the name in a circle with 3 lines in the center), both inside and on the underside, it could be deemed fraudulent. True, today's buyers might be aware of its contemporaneity and not be deceived into thinking it was actually made by Westmoreland, but woe to uninformed future collectors who see the logo and assume the new Rosso Lion covered dish was produced in the Grapeville factory by Westmoreland and at a time prior to 1984.

To help collectors see how the McKee Lion top differs from the Westmoreland/Rosso product, both versions are shown here, one after the other - **a signed McKee above and a Westmoreland/Rosso**.

Apart from the bases, of course, you should note the following differences: The McKee Lion's head rises up higher, so that the open space between the paws and the chin measures $\frac{5}{8}$ inches compared with the Lion on the left with only a $\frac{3}{8}$ inch open space. This fully one-quarter inch difference is caused by the pushed down head, resulting in the elongated appearance of the nose and the entire head itself. To me, at least, this suggests Westmoreland may have acquired the original

mold but in damaged or defective condition. Whether that mold was reworked or a completely new mold made from a casting is uncertain.

Abb. 2005-4/xxx
signed Lion covered dish from McKee, 1890s
Split Rib Base
unsigned Lion covered dish from Westmoreland 1950-1960s
(Rosso 1994, with new mark „Westmoreland“)
Wide Rib Base
Opaque News, March 1995, p. 10
I.a. Chiarenza, Milk Glass Book, pp. 181 and 182



Other features of the new Rosso Lion, noted also by Barbara Scott, may be observed, such as the heavier weight, the glossy look and slippery feel of the glass.

Member Frances Price has **one of the earlier Westmoreland versions**. They appear to be quite scarce, and probably were never produced as a regular item, since they are not shown in any of the Westmoreland catalogs to my knowledge. In the 1950s, they were advertised for sale by the P. & J. Co., Spicer, Minnesota (see Opaque News, Dec. 1989) and later (circa 1965-70) by AA Importing (see The Glass Collector, Spring-Summer, 1983, p. 48). Frances reports that the one in her collection has a slightly bluish tint and the slab of glass on which the Lion rests is not as thick and therefore not as heavy as Rosso's piece. While the 1950-60s Westmoreland Lion preserves some of the distinctive McKee features, such as the fine hairs on the snout and above the eyes, there is some loss of sharp detail. By comparison, Rossos' new issues lack almost

all of these fine details, and in my specimen, at least, there is a curious straight line, a scar about one inch long, running athwart the back of the Lion's head on the right side. If you have one also, it would be interesting to know whether you find the same scar.

Some Parting Thoughts

In this article, I have suggested the kinds of distinctions I make in my own mind when I encounter the profusion of objects all lumped together indiscriminately under the catchall word - Reproduction. I'm sure other milk glass collectors will have different views concerning the categories I have suggested. In fact, we probably need

more than just these four classifications to cover every possible variation of the types of copies and the ways they are produced. As seen in the example of the recent Rosso Lion covered dish, when confronted with copies of copies that are themselves mismatched copies of originals, the complexity is enough to defy definition. And I have not even mentioned the many highly collectible products produced by **L. G. Wright**, which can in some instances be considered reproductions of

originals, and in others, having mismatched tops and bottoms, as anomalies. My suggestion is that you create your own categories, terminology and definitions.

I enjoy collecting good, high-quality authentic milk glass reproductions of all types, whether as reissues or replicas. Not only are they intrinsically attractive and collectible in their own right, but they sometimes make desirable pieces affordable when the price of an antique original is beyond my means. Often, too, they are issued in very limited numbers and may, in time, become as scarce and almost as highly prized as the originals.

My only caution is to beware of the outright fakes, unless of course you have an interest in collecting fakes.

Perhaps, like me, you buy them for serious study and research. Remember, however, that when we purchase them, we are putting money in the pockets of those who make and sell the fakes and, therefore, we are just encouraging them to continue to make and sell more. I can think of no circle more vicious, and I plead guilty to being a part of it.

Look also for:

- PK 1999-2 Chiarenza, SG, Robin on Pedestal Base - Varianten der Deckeldose mit einer Taube auf dem Nest
- PK 2000-2 Chiarenza, Der Britische Löwe (und andere Löwen aus Pressglas)
- PK 2000-2 Chiarenza, Felis Leo in Glas
- PK 2000-6 SG, Zwei interessante Anzeigen in Glass Collector's Digest: Replikat von Deckeldosen von Rosso
- PK 2001-3 O'Connor, Rosso's Wholesale Glass: A Family Business
- PK 2001-4 Felt, Augustus H. Heisey & Co., Newark, Ohio, und seine Konkurrenten
- PK 2004-3 Marshal, Perhaps Our Favorite - eine Dose mit liegender Kuh auf einem Korb von Gebrüder von Streit, Berlin, um 1900
- PK 2004-4 Carmony, Zwei Milk Glass Stücke, eines ein Schnäppchen, eines ein Reifall (Fälschung Deckeldose „Heisey“ aus Taiwan)
- PK 2005-4 Chiarenza, Reproductions: Naughty or Nice? [Reproduktionen: schlimm oder nett?] siehe auch englische, französische und tschechische Übersetzungen in www.pressglas-korrespondenz.de
- PK 2005-4 SG, Original, Reproduktion, Kopie, Nachahmung, Fälschung, Betrug ... bei Pressgläsern siehe auch englische, französische und tschechische Versionen in www.pressglas-korrespondenz.de
- PK 2005-4 Smith, Originale, Reproduktionen, Neuauflagen, Kopien, Fälschungen von Pressglas siehe auch englische, französische und tschechische Übersetzungen in www.pressglas-korrespondenz.de