
HUMMEL FIGURINE RESOURCE GUIDE

As the girl behind Antique-hq.com I get asked many questions about Hummel figurines. This Hummel resource guide has easy to use instruction on how to care for, clean, display and store your Hummel figurines. In addition I have included information on the history of Hummel, frequently used term guide, and a detailed date guide.

Hummel Figurine Resource Guide	1
Chapter One: Hummel History	2
Chapter Two: How to Authenticate a Hummel Figurine	4
Chapter Three: Detailed Hummel Age Guide:	7
1935 - 1949: (Trademark #1)	7
1950 - 1955: BEE V MARKS.....	8
1940 - 1959 The Full Bee: (trademark #2)	9
1960 - 1972 The Stylized Bee: (trademark #3)	9
1960 - 1963: The Large Stylized Bee.....	9
1960 - 1972: The Small Stylized Bee.....	9
1964 - 1972: The Three Line Mark (trademark #4)	10
1972 - 1979: The Goebel Bee or the Last Bee Mark (trademark #5).....	10
1979 - Present: The Missing Bee Mark: (trademark #6, 7, 8).....	11
Chapter Four: How to Cleaning Your Hummel Figurine	13
Dusting or Light Cleaning:.....	13
Heavy cleaning:	14
Chapter Five: Condition Issues and How to Prevent Them:	15
Does your Hummel have a silvery sheen?.....	15
How do you prevent this?.....	15
What if this has already occurred?	15
Crazing:	15
How to keep your Hummel from discoloring:.....	15
Chapter Six: How to Store Your Hummel	16
Chapter Seven: Hummel Terms	17



Franz Goebel, owner of the renowned porcelain firm, W. Goebel Porzellanfabrik, had an instinct that figurines of children would appeal to Germans hungering for joy during difficult times. When the artwork of Sister Hummel came to his attention, Franz travelled to Munich to see more. He then made a monumental decision to create a line of figurines based on the drawings of Sister Maria Innocentia Hummel.

A Goebel representative made the first trip to the Convent armed with three sample sculptures. He was well-received by Sister Hummel and returned triumphant. Naturally, some details needed to be ironed out. But in principle, the Convent of Siessen accepted the idea.

An exciting period of experimentation followed. The artist recognized that Goebel sculptors needed freedom to interpret her work. Her primary involvement was with color and decoration. She worked closely with Goebel painters to develop a new palette of colors to match her drawings.

When everyone was satisfied with the new line, Franz Goebel asked Sister Hummel for sole manufacturing and distribution rights, pledging his personal supervision of the figurines that would bear her name. The artist insisted on further controls of authenticity and decoration. Of course, royalties would go to the Convent of Siessen. An agreement was signed on January 9th, 1935. This date has since been considered the official birthday of M.I. Hummel figurines.

There was no better occasion to bring the new line to market than the 1935 Leipzig Spring Fair. Here, important buyers came looking for the most innovative European products. The figurines attracted attention at the show, and the introduction was

deemed a success. The M.I. Hummel line grew quickly. Just as Franz' intuition had promised, these joyous representations of childhood seemed to capture the imagination of the public.

World War II severely restricted figurine production. But once the war ended, M.I. Hummel figurines continued winning friends all over the world. As the merry figurines appeared once more in shops throughout Germany, they became instantly popular especially with American G.I.'s.

Then a cloud drifted onto the horizon. Sister Hummel had contracted a lung ailment which was eventually diagnosed as tuberculosis. Sister Maria Innocentia Hummel passed away on November 6, 1946 at the young age of 37.

This was a woman who had never lost the vital spark of youth. With the eyes of an artist she saw a spiritual essence in the life around her and captured it on canvas, simply and honestly, as her gift to the world.

Thankfully, the Sister was prolific and left behind a treasure-trove of artwork - the basis for new M.I. Hummel figurines to this day. Although no one could quite fill her shoes, an Artistic Board was appointed at the Convent of Siessen as guardians of the legacy of Sister Hummel.

Today, M.I. Hummel figurines are the world's most beloved collectible, a tribute to the spirit of childhood and the talent of a brilliant artist.





The Hummel back stamp and other definitive marks can help determine if a figurine, plate or bell is a genuine M.I. Hummel piece. The first mark you should look for is the signature of Sister M.I. Hummel incised on the base of the figurine. This is on almost every Hummel piece. When Sister Hummel made her historic contract with Franz Goebel, it was agreed that her signature, her personal stamp of approval, would appear on every piece. To this day this signature is still being used. The only exceptions are on figurines without bases or an adequate surface to display the signature.



THE GOEBEL BACKSTAMP

The Goebel stamp is another way to identify if your figurine is a Hummel. On the underside of the figurine you will find the official Goebel trademark.

The look of the trademark has varied since 1935. Every authentic M.I. Hummel figurine will have a Goebel stamp on its underside. Over the years, any change in the back stamp has been a source of excitement for M.I. Hummel collectors. Most of the known marks used over the years are shown here. However, from time to time, a rare and undocumented variation may surface.



Goebel used the following trademarks on all its products from 1935 to 2009 (The production of Hummel figurines was stopped in 2009. A new company has bought the rights to Hummel and will start producing the figures. They will no longer bare the Goebel mark.). M. I. Hummel figurines were first made commercially available in 1935.

The letters WG in the mark found below the crown are the initials of one of the founders of the company, William Goebel.

Some Crown Marks are found twice on the same piece, more often one mark incised and the other stamped. This is known as the "Double Crown Mark". Sometimes you will find an earlier trademark as well as an older trademark on the same piece. This is because the figurine piece was fired during a trademark transition period. The figurine was fired under one trademark but was not painted until the new trademark was implemented. When a "Double Mark" is present the latter mark is the mark that is used for dating and appraisal purposes.

The Hummel signature is found as a base rim marking. The signature usually is placed on the edge or the vertical edge of the base. Some people have confused the M.I. Hummel signature with the Crown Trademark. The signature is not a Crown but a W G.

M. J. Hummel © 

After World War II ended the United States Occupation Forces allowed Goebel to begin exporting figurines. The pieces were marked "Made in US Zone". There were many variation of this stamp, some of which included the words "Germany" and "US Zone". These marks signified that the figurines were made in the occupied zone of Germany. All these marks should be treated as Crown marks.

Made in U.S. Zone
Germany.

Made in U.S. Zone
Germany

U.S. Zone

Made in
U.S. Zone

MADE IN
GERMANY

MADE IN
U.S. ZONE

Made in
U.S.-Zone
Germany.

U.S. Zone
Germany.

U.S.-Zone
Germany.

U.S.-Zone
Germany

U.S. Zone
Germany.

CHAPTER THREE: DETAILED HUMMEL AGE GUIDE:

In this chapter I have created a detailed Hummel age guide. Use this guide to date your Hummel figures. The date of a Hummel figurine can have a great affect on its value.

Since 1934-35 there have been several changes in the trademarks used by the Goebel Company on M.I. Hummel items and figurines.

Goebel has used various trademarks on all of their products, not just Hummel items. This happened until about mid 1991, when a new mark was developed exclusively for use on M. I. Hummel items.

1935 - 1949: (Trademark #1)



- This mark was used by Goebel on all its products in 1935, when M. I. Hummel figurines were first made commercially.
- Incised Crown Mark - Stamped Crown Mark - Wide Ducal Crown Mark
- The letters WG below the crown in the mark are the initials of William Goebel, one of the founders of the company.



The above picture illustrates the incised Crown Mark and the stamped Full Bee

trademark.

1950 - 1955: BEE V MARKS



Full Bee



Incised Full Bee



The High Bee 1956



The Small Bee 1957



The Baby Bee 1958



The Vee Bee



In 1950 the Goebel Company made a major change to their trademark. They incorporated a bee in a V. It is thought that the bumblebee part of the mark was derived from a childhood nickname of Sister Maria Innocentia Hummel, meaning bumblebee. The bee flies within a V. The V is from the first letter of the German word for distributing company Verkaufsgesellschaft. The mark was to honour M. I. Hummel, who died in 1946.

There are actually 12 variations of the Bee marks, but some are grouped together as the differences between them are not considered particularly significant.

1940 - 1959 The Full Bee: (trademark #2)



1957 to 1960

The Full Bee mark is the first of the Bee marks to appear. The mark evolved over 20 years until the company began to modernize it. It is sometimes found in an incised circle. The very large bee flying in the V remained until around 1956, when the bee was reduced in size and lowered into the V. It can be found incised, stamped in black or stamped in blue, in that order, through its evolution.

1960 - 1972 The Stylized Bee: (trademark #3)

A major change in the way the bee is rendered in the trademark made its appearance in 1960. The Stylized Bee (trademark #3) appeared in three basic forms through 1972. The first two are both classified as the Stylized Bee, but the third is considered a fourth step in the evolution, the Three Line Mark (trademark#4). Goebel re-used the Crown-WG back stamp from 1969 until 1972. It is not always present, but when it shows it is a small blue decal application.

1960 - 1963: The Large Stylized Bee



This trademark was used from 1960 through 1963. The "W. Germany" is placed to the right of the bottom of the V. The color of the mark will be black or blue. It is sometimes found inside an incised circle. When you find the Large Stylized Bee mark, you will normally find a stamped "West" or "Western Germany" in black elsewhere on the base, but not always.

1960 - 1972: The Small Stylized Bee



1960-1972 This mark is also considered to be trademark #3. It was used concurrently with the Large Stylized Bee from about 1960 and continued until approximately 1972. The "W. Germany" appears centred under the V and Bee. The mark is usually rendered in blue and is often accompanied by a stamped black West or Western Germany. This mark is sometimes referred to as the One Line Mark.



1964 - 1972: The Three Line Mark (trademark #4)



This trademark used the same stylized V and Bee as the others, but also included three lines of wording beside it. This mark is stamped in blue.

1972 - 1979: The Goebel Bee or the Last Bee Mark (trademark #5)



Actually developed and occasionally used as early as 1970, this major change is known as the last Bee mark because the next change in the trademark no longer incorporated any form of the V and bee. The mark was used until approximately mid 1979, when it began to phase out, completing the transition to the new trademark in 1980. There are three minor variations in the mark. Generally the mark was placed under the glaze from 1972-1976 and is found placed over the glaze 1976-1979

1979 - Present: The Missing Bee Mark: (trademark #6, 7, 8)



1979-1990 (6)



1990-1999 (6)



2000-2003 (7)



2004 (8)

Current Trademark



2009

The transition to the missing bee trademark began in 1979 and was complete by mid 1980. In conjunction with this change, the company instituted the practice of adding to the traditional artist's mark the date the artist finished painting the piece.



In 1991 Goebel made a move of historical importance. They changed the trademark once again. This time the change was not only symbolic of the reunification of the two Germanys by the removal of the "West" from the mark, but very significant in another way. Until then they used the same trademark on virtually all of their products. The current mark is now exclusively used on Goebel products made from the paintings and drawings of M. I. Hummel. Other Goebel products will bear a different mark than that used on Hummel pieces.

There are marks in addition to the U. S. Zone marks. First of all there are several colors of marks.

The colors found to date are:

- Black
- Purple
- Red
- Brown
- Green
- Blue the color blue has been used exclusively since 1972.

Starting in 1990 Goebel began stamping any newly issued piece with the words "First Issue" during the first year of production only. In 1991 they began marking the retiring year with the words "Final Issue"

Goebel's 125th anniversary was in 1996, and all figures produced in that year bear the special Anniversary back stamp



Cleaning for your Hummel can be tricky. It is important to know how to preserve and clean your Hummel figurine. In this chapter I have included step by step instruction on how to clean your Hummel figurine.

Here are a few things to know before you clean your Hummel figurine:

Hummel figurines are made of Earthenware. This is a type of ceramic. Any part of the figurine that is not protected by the glaze can absorb moisture.

Hummel figurines are created with an air hole. These holes are usually in a hidden place where they are not visible. The reason for this hole is so gases can escape during the firing process. If this hole was not present the Hummel figurine can shatter while being fired.

The inside of the figurine is not glazed. If you submerge your figurine in water to clean it without covering the air hole water will get inside. Once water has got inside your figurine it can cause unseen damage that will become visible over time. This is usual results in gradual discoloration of the figurine.

Dusting or Light Cleaning:

To dust your Hummel figurine use a soft clean cloth or fine hair paint brush. Dust the figurine making sure to have a firm hold on it.

To do a light cleaning on your figurine use a damp cloth and gently wipe the figurine. Again make sure you have a firm hold on your figurine.

Heavy cleaning:

If your Hummel needs more than a dusting or light cleaning you can follow these steps.

Step one: Hummel's get very slippery when wet. You will want to make sure to clean your figurine over a surface that is protected in case your Hummel was to slip while cleaning.

Step two: Make sure to cover the air hole before putting your Hummel under any water.

Step three: Use a mild soap (i.e. baby shampoo) and a soft cloth to gently wash your figurine.

Step four: Rinse your Hummel making sure the air hole is covered.

Step five: Dry your Hummel with a soft clean cloth. Then allow to fully air dry at room temperature before storing.



There are some issues that a Hummel may incur. Most of these can be prevented. Some can even be corrected after they have occurred. But things like crazing can not be fixed once they have started.

Does your Hummel have a silvery sheen?

These shiny spots that have a silvery look to them are from oxidation. The Metallic paints used by Goebel artist to hand paint the figurines will re-oxidize. The main cause of this is excessively damp storage or by wrapping the figurine in silk paper.

How do you prevent this?

- Store your Hummel in a dry cool place and avoid extreme temperature changes.
- Make sure they are wrapped in colorless foam or bubble wrap.

What if this has already occurred?

There is a cure. Professional re-firing will restore the figurines to its original appearance.

Crazing:

Crazing: is one of the most common condition problems that occur with Hummel figurines. Crazing has a major impact on the value of your Hummel.

Crazing is hairline cracks in the glaze on the Hummel.

To prevent crazing, keep your Hummel in an area where the temperature and humidity levels are fairly consistent. High humidity areas can cause moisture problem, which can cause discoloration. Moving your Hummel from a humid area to a dry area will cause expansion and contraction. This will lead to crazing.

How to keep your Hummel from discoloring:

- Try not to keep your Hummel in direct sunlight. Direct light over time will discolor your Hummel.
- Take care not to get water in your Hummel figurine. Make sure you cover the air.

When storing your Hummel figurine, use the following tips to help preserve your figurine.

A lot of people like to store fragile items in newspapers. This is an issue when storing your Hummel figurines. The ink from the newspapers will start to bleed into the paint on your Hummel. This is something that can be fixed, but it's time consuming.

The best way to store your Hummel is to keep it in the original box and padding to protect it. If you don't have the box anymore here's are other ways you can store your Hummel:

Wrap the figurine in colorless foam or bubble wrap. Try to put it the figurine in its own box if possible. Make sure to store your Hummel in an area where there are not extreme temperature changes (crazing) or excessive humidity (discoloration).



CHAPTER SEVEN: HUMMEL TERMS

In this chapter I have included some commonly used terms amongst Hummel collectors and dealers. Knowing these terms can save you time and money.

- Closed Edition: (CE)-Pieces no longer in production.
- Temporarily withdrawn: (TW)-Pieces that have been suspended or withdrawn from current production, this piece may be reinstated at a later date.
- Mold Number: This is a number incised on bottom of each MI Hummel piece at the factory, and is used for identification purposes.
- Trademark (TM): This is a series of 8 marks and symbols used to date Hummel pieces. The following markings are used to date Hummel pieces:
 - Trademark 1 – Crown – 1935-1955
 - Trademark 2 – Full Bee – 1950-1957
 - Trademark 3 – Stylized Bee – 1957-1964
 - Trademark 4 – Three Line – 1964-1972
 - Trademark 5 – Goebel Bee – 1972-1979
 - Trademark 6 – Goebel – 1979-1991
 - Trademark 7 – New Crown – 1991-1999
 - Trademark 8 - Current – 2000-Present
- crazing: Hairline cracks in the glaze of the figurine caused by many factors including:
 - Natural condition occurring as the piece ages.
 - Exposure to high levels of heat or the humidity.
- Final Issue: Figurine that has been retired from production.
- First Issue: Term used since 1990 to refer first year of production. This was stamped on the figurine during the first year of production.

- Oversized: Figurine that measures larger than the standard size.
- Open Edition: This refers to the pieces that are currently in production.
- Exclusive Edition (EE): Used to designate M.I. Hummel Club figurines.
- Double Crown: This is where the crown marking appears as both incised and stamped.
- White Over glaze: This is when a piece that has not been painted, but has been glazed and fired.
- Reinstated: The figurine has been placed back into production.
- Sample Model: Piece made as a sample only and not approved for production.
- Faience: Is a finish that is an opaque colored glaze. Only a few early pieces were produced in this manner.
- US Zone: Figurines produced after WWII from 1946 to 1948 when Germany was not divided.
- Terra Cotta: A limited number of pieces were made using this reddish clay, which were called terra cotta and were unpainted.
- Doughnut Base: The raised circular support on the underside of a piece.
- Hollow Mold: A piece that is open on the underside of the base allowing a viewer to see into the cavity of the piece.
- Waffle Base: This is a “quartered or divided” base.
- Baby Bee: Trademark used in 1958, which is a small bee flying in the V.
- Incised: Mark or wording that is actually pressed into the piece versus being printed or stamped on the surface.

- Limited Edition: Produced for a specific period of time or in a specific number of pieces.
- International Figurines: Produced in 1940, these figurines are dressed in the national dress of their countries.
- Decimal Point: Used to attempt to eliminate confusion in Mold #'s that can be interpreted as 2 different numbers, i.e., 6 and 9 – Is easier as 6. and 9.



Thank you for purchasing the Hummel Resource Guide. I hope you have found this guide useful. If you have any questions or need further assistance feel free to contact me at www.antique-hq.com.

