

PITTSBURGH STEIN SOCIETY NEWS

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From all of your officers of the *Pittsburgh Stein Society*, we want to wish all of you and your loved ones a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. HAPPY NEW YEAR !!

Meeting Schedule

As approved by the membership at our November 12, 2022 meeting, once again we will plan on having five stein club meetings in 2023. The planned dates of the meetings are: February 18th, April 22nd, June 24th, September 23rd, and November 11th. As always, the meetings will be held on Saturdays at the Teutonia Männerchor Club. Look for future newsletters for details of each meeting.

Happy Birthday Wishes



Happy Birthday To:

STEPHANIE FAHNER JANUARY 2
JOYCE HOFFMAN JANUARY 2
BONNIE GLAZER JANUARY 3
EVE HESHLER JANUARY 10
KEVIN VARRATO JANUARY 23
MAXIM DOROSA JANUARY 28
HERB BERMAN JANUARY 29

May your special day be filled with happiness and good health !!!

Dues

Have you sent in your renewal dues yet? A notification was sent out in December of last year letting you know if your dues were up for renewal. Please send your payment to our Treasurer, Joyce Hoffman, to renew your membership. Thank You for your support of the PSS.

Featured Article of the Month

Looking to purchase a Mettlach stein and wondering what all those marks on the bottom side of the stein mean? This month's featured article written by Walt Vogdes for Stein Collectors International, tells us what the most common marks mean on the most common of Mettlach steins (if there is such a thing). Thanks, Walt.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Published Monthly by the *Pittsburgh Stein Society*

OFFICERS

PresidentTom Levenson
Vice President Bill Boss
Treasurer Joyce Hoffman
Secretary Mark Paden
Guest Speaker Coordinator.. Tom Weber
Newsletter Editor Tom Levenson

MEMBERS DIRECTORY

This month we will (hopefully) be sending out the new Members Directory for the years 2023 – 2024. This new directory will be sent out as an email to all members except for those few members who do not have an email address. In those cases, hard copies of the directory will be sent. Please look for these new directories in a few weeks.

Thank You

A big THANK YOU goes out to all those members who have renewed their memberships for 2023 and beyond and a special THANK YOU to Frank & Yvette Weidler and Brian & Vicki Hoffman for their kind and generous monetary donation.

News From SCI

A vote of the Board of Trustees of Stein Collectors International was taken regarding the location of the SCI 2023 International Convention. The unanimous choice of the Board was Dayton, Ohio. The dates of the convention are July 25 – 29, 2023. For more information on the convention, please see the attached insert. If you are not a member of Stein Collectors International, this would be a great time for you to join so that you can take part in all the fun and informative activities that make up a SCI convention. To join, all you have to do is visit

SCI's website www.stein-collectors.org and follow the simple instructions. Being a SCI member helps our PSS chapter maintain our charter with Stein Collectors International.

Back To Basics

Once again, at the beginning of a new year, we feel that it is helpful to remind us all the most basic and common names of the parts of a beer stein. With that in mind, please see the attached information sheet describing a common beer stein. Using the correct terminology is always important in any conversation especially when we are trying to describe a part of a stein.

Congratulations

Congratulations to our fellow PSS member Leo Grace. Leo recently retired after many successful years of project management with one of the largest construction contractors in the USA. Now you can sit back, Leo, and take it easy, enjoy life and spend as much time as you want traveling with Dianne and hunting for that one-of-a-kind, special beer stein. Congratulations.

Tip of the Month

So, you have this nice-looking porcelain stein but the pewter lid is old and dark and not shiny like the inside of the lid. A good polishing of the outside of the lid will make it look great. Right ?
DON'T DO IT !!!! The patina that builds up over years and years of exposure to the air is what we look for in antique steins. A bright and shiny lid on the inside as well as the outside indicates a new lid replacement or a reproduction stein. Keep that original lid looking old and you will be happy that you did.

The 2023 SCI Convention in Dayton, OH

SCI's 56th annual convention will be held in Dayton, Ohio, July 25 through 29, 2023. There will be two days of pre-convention activities: tours on July 25 and a commercial auction by Fox Auctions on July 26. The convention itself will be Thursday through Saturday, July 27 through July 29, with check-out from the hotel on Sunday, July 30.

The convention hotel is the Marriott at the University of Dayton, 1414 South Patterson Boulevard, Dayton, Ohio 45409. The hotel is convenient to restaurants and shops serving the university community and to Carillon Historical Park. The hotel has a complimentary shuttle which will take guests anywhere within a five mile radius.

Dayton is known as the birthplace of aviation, the city where Wilbur and Orville Wright developed the first airplanes. Sites associated with the Wright brothers range from their early bicycle shop to Hawthorn Hall, Orville's later home. The 1905 Wright Flyer III, which Orville considered the first practical airplane, is exhibited at Carillon Historical Park.

Dayton is a fitting location for the National Museum of the United States Airforce, the largest aviation museum in the world. It has 19 acres of indoor ex-



National Museum of the United States Airforce,

hibit space containing over 360 airplanes and space vehicles plus exhibits, a theater and restaurants. Visitors may board a NASA space shuttle and four former presidential airplanes.

An SCI member, the late Roger Glass, donated his beer stein collection to a Dayton museum. It is now on permanent display at the Carillon Historical Park, a museum complex of over 40 buildings and structures less than a mile from our convention hotel. We will view his collection during the convention.

Dayton is also known for the home of Paul Laurence Dunbar, the famous

African American poet; the Dayton Art Institute, a major regional museum; its parks and paved trails along the Great Miami River; and more.

The convention itself will feature a strong program of speakers, round tables, auctions and stein sales, along with the hospitality room and afternoon tea in a nineteenth century mansion.

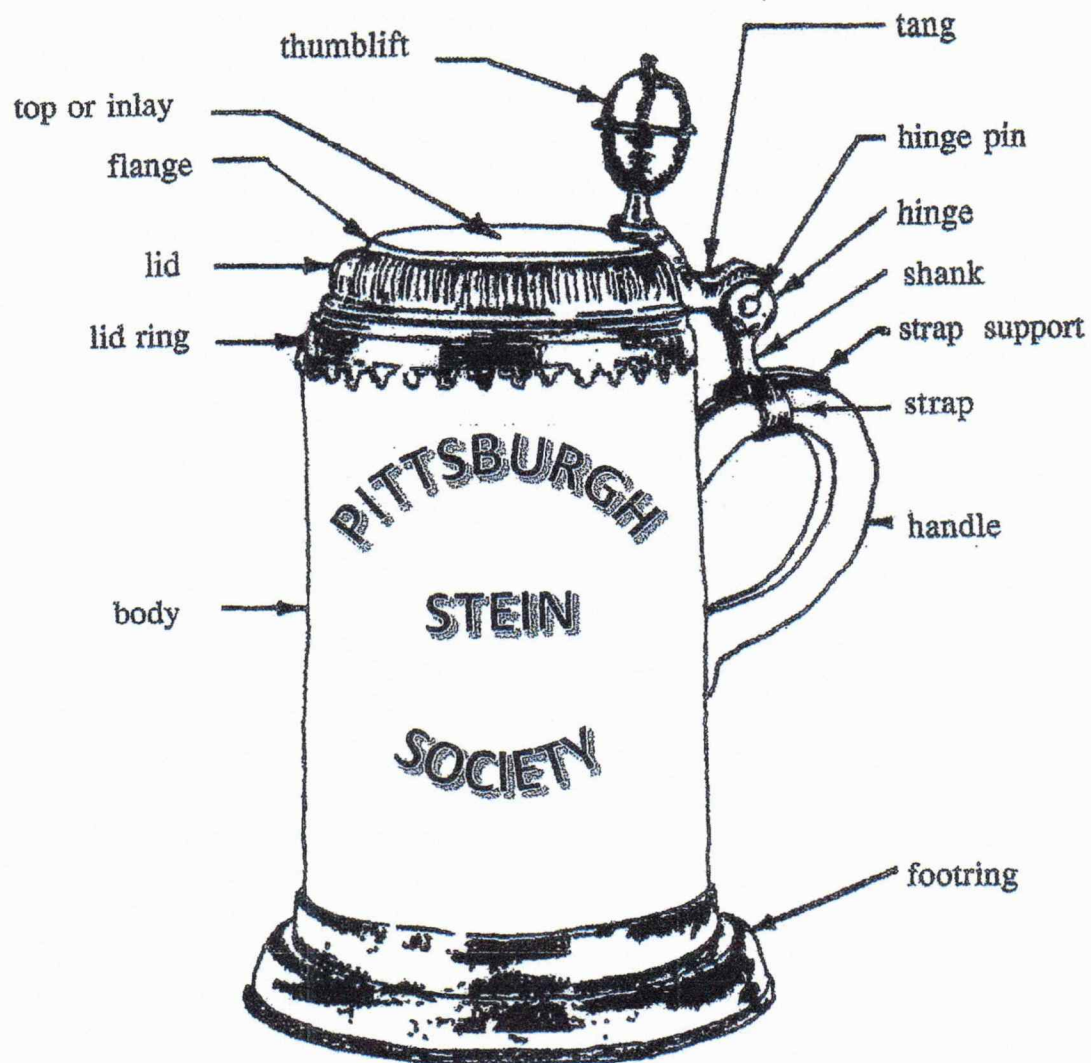
Convention rates at the Marriott at the University of Dayton are \$125 for a single or double room. These rates are also offered three days prior to and after the convention period on a space available basis. Parking is complimentary.

To make reservations phone 1-800-MARRIOTT. Say you are with the "Stein Collectors International Convention 2023" group. We urge you to make your reservations early.

For questions contact Richard Strom at stromrwk@gmail.com or 301-530-2403.

Watch for detailed convention information in the March, 2023 issue of *Prosit*.





The most common names for the various parts of a stein's mountings.

~ The Essential Mettlach Marks ~

by Walt Vogdes



This short article describes the most common marks found on stoneware items manufactured by the Mettlach factory of Villeroy and Boch, including trademarks, form numbers, decoration numbers, and capacity and date codes. While many others were used, the marks examined in this article will cover the majority of the marks you are likely to encounter, unless you have an extensive and advanced collection of Mettlach.

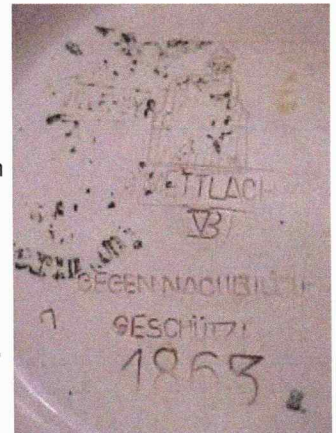
The two most commonly found trademarks are the incised *abbey* mark and the painted or stamped *Mercury* mark. The abbey mark, frequently referred to incorrectly as a "castle", is a representation of an 11th century abbey which still stands today in the village of Mettlach. This trademark, among other marks, was pressed by hand into the bottom of the piece. The mark consists of the abbey above a banner, or placard, which includes the word "METTLACH" and the joined letters V and B (for Villeroy and Boch). These two elements of a single mark were actually applied separately, and as a result, it is common to find examples where they are not aligned exactly as in our example. The incised abbey mark was normally used on relief, etched and cameo wares, and on some later print-under-glaze or PUG items.



The Mercury mark, usually stamped in green but also known in blue and black, shows (from the top) the head of Mercury with a winged cap, two caducei or snake-entwined staffs, a banner or placard with the name "VILLEROY & BOCH", and a fancy semicircular banner bearing the factory name. This mark was also applied by hand, but stamped rather than incised. It was commonly used for marking PUG items.

Collectors owe great thanks to Villeroy and Boch for marking their items so well. Even so, there are many variations in the marks which are not fully understood today, and it is not unusual to find a Mettlach stein without a trademark. In addition, even when items were fully marked with

the Mercury trademark when they left the factory, because it is stamped in ink this mark frequently deteriorates over the years, so that mere traces of the blackish-green ink may be all that remains. The base shown to the right once included two marks stamped in green ink, the Mercury mark above a second mark stating that the stein was "Made in Germany". Even when there is no trademark at all, Mettlach items can frequently be identified with confidence. The easiest way, assuming the piece does bear a form number, is to look it up in a Mettlach reference and confirm the design and other characteristics. In the rare case that there is no form number, you must rely on other characteristics and knowledge of Mettlach wares, and the task becomes both more difficult and less certain.



The figure to the right shows the prototypical base marks on an **etched** stein, in this case form number 2276. Except for the unexplained "10" marked in black ink, all of these marks are incised into the body of the stein.

- the abbey trademark appears at the top
- the words "GEGEN NACHBILDUNG GESCHÜTZT" which means "protected against copying"
- the form number 2276
- the capacity code (a Roman numeral, in this case V)
- the unexplained "mystery number", 34
- the date code for (18)96

Most of these marks are straightforward, but the capacity or size code needs explanation. This code originally indicated the *relative* size of the piece among all of those sharing the same form number, with Roman numeral I indicating the largest. Later the scheme was changed to indicate the *absolute* capacity of the piece, with I

representing the one-liter size, II being for the half-liter, and so on. The V shown in this illustration signifies a quarter-liter capacity.



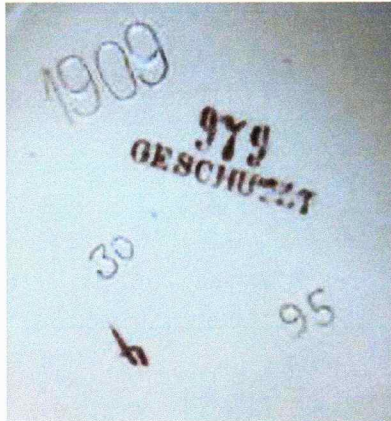
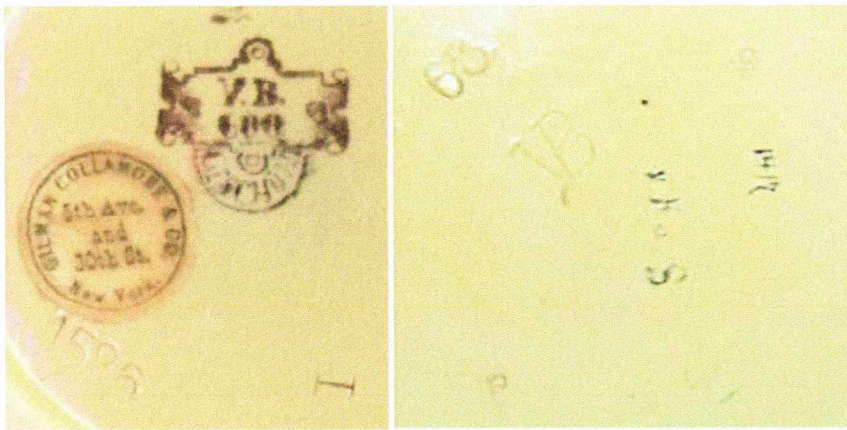
To the left we see another typical set of Mettlach base marks. While the abbey trademark is slightly different, it is easily recognizable and should not be confused with the marks of any other factory. The form number (1756) and capacity (I) identify this stein as one of the tapestry and relief models in the one-liter size. The date code to the right indicates the stein was made in 1888. The "mystery number" is still a mystery, although it has been suggested that this number is indicative of the area in the factory where the item was produced, or perhaps identifies the primary decorator. Here we also note a hand-inked "5." Mettlach wares frequently display one or more such numbers, sometimes in gold paint. It is generally thought that these numbers identified the person or position in the factory where certain hand operations were performed during decorating. This number and the mystery number were both likely elements in Mettlach's overall quality control process.

Turning now to the marks which are found on **PUG** items, the figure to the right shows all of the elements which we expect to find. [This example is actually from the base of a PUG punch bowl by Heinrich Schlitt.] The trademark in this case is provided by the stamped Mercury mark. The incised form number is 2339, the unexplained "mystery mark" is "1" and the date is (19)05. The stamped black number "1028" is the decoration number. The word "GESCHUTZT" appearing in black ink below the decoration number means that the design is copyrighted. This is one of numerous words and phrases which you may encounter on Mettlach wares.



PUG items are frequently referred to by the combination of decoration and form number, as 1028(2339). This is particularly useful in the case of PUG steins, where many different designs were applied to the same body. The most common forms for PUG designs are 1526 (ranging in size from quarter-liter to three-liter), and 1909 (quarter-liter to half-liter in size). While the majority of PUG decorations appear on only one form and in only one size, some were applied to more than one form, and a few to the same form but in more than one size.

While the above figures illustrate the most common marks for Mettlach wares, other marks were used. Two common variants are shown to the left. The first figure shows the base marks from a one-liter PUG body (1526). The decoration number and trademark are combined in a placard-style transfer, either black or brown in color. Note the "V.B." identifying Villeroy and Boch, the decoration number "600", and the copyright claim, "GESCHÜTZT". To the right we see a different trademark, the joined letters V and B, used on form 63 in 1889. (The other painted marks identify the decorator of this handpainted student stein.)



The final figure in this article shows the base marks on a PUG stein which does not bear a trademark. Even so, it is quite easy for a collector who is familiar with the marks and forms to identify this stein as being produced by Mettlach. In this case the form (1909) is one of the most common PUG forms used by Mettlach. Despite the absence of the trademark, all of the rest of the marks on this stein, including the decoration number, are characteristic of Mettlach. Of course, if anyone is still uncertain, it's a simple matter to look up 979(1909) in reference works to confirm the design and perhaps even view a picture!