

PITTSBURGH STEIN SOCIETY NEWS

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Is it February Already ?? Can't Be !

Next Meeting Schedule

Our next meeting for the new year will be this month on February 18, 2023. As usual, we will meet in the Ratskeller of the Teutonia Männerchor Club on the North Side of Pittsburgh. A sandwich buffet luncheon will be served at approximately 12:00 noon with the general meeting to follow. Due to the "Lerne Deutsch" club meeting running from 10:30 am to 11:30 am in the Ratskeller, stein sales tables may not be able to be set up until 11:30 am. This will be a show-n-tell meeting so please bring a stein or two to share with all those in attendance.

Members Directory

The brand new 2023-2024 Members Directory has been sent out to all current PSS members. If you did not receive yours, contact Tom Levenson.

Happy Birthday Wishes



Happy Birthday To:

JACK BANKS	FEBRUARY 1
HAL PLATT	FEBRUARY 12
ANDREW FAHNER	FEBRUARY 17
YVETTE WEIDLER	FEBRUARY 17
KIM SELLERS	FEBRUARY 18
LEO GRACE	FEBRUARY 19
JUSTINA LEVENSON	FEBRUARY 22
TOM WEBER	FEBRUARY 24
JOEL STUMPF	FEBRUARY 25

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

Did You Know

Having only 28 days in common years (not leap years), February is the only month of the year that can pass without a single full moon. Using Coordinated Universal Time (replaced Greenwich Mean Time) as the basis for determining the date and time of a full moon, this last happened in 2018 and will next happen in 2037.

Reference: Wikipedia

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OFFICERS

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

Tip of the Month

Last month's newsletter Tip talked about never polishing the pewter lids of antique steins. This month's *Tip of the Month* is the exact opposite. Silver, copper, and brass steins want to be and should be polished on a regular basis. Their shine should be brilliant just as it was when the stein was manufactured. The best way to keep this brilliant shine is to hand polish the piece with an all-metals polish such as MAAS metal polish or similar. This is **not** an inexpensive polish but it will not harm the stein and the shine can last up to six months. So, all you lucky stein collectors out there who have one or more silver, copper, or brass steins, keep them brightly shining and they will be the best-looking stein in your collection.

Featured Article of the Month

Thanks to a recommendation made by our Guest Speaker Coordinator, Tom Weber, this month's featured article tells us all about the Whites of Utica stein manufacturer. Noah White started his company in 1839 and it continued for 71 years, shutting down in 1910. This article was written by Ron Fox and Dave Roche for *Prosit* magazine's September 2007 issue. Thanks, Tom, for the great recommendation.

Show and Tell Time

As you know, we try to have guest speakers attend our meetings so that we can hear and learn from experts in their particular fields of interest related to the stein collecting world. In the past, we have been very lucky to have had some really top notch guest speakers visit our meetings to share their knowledge and excitement about stein collecting with us. We have heard from Master Steinologist and SCI Executive Director, Steve Steigerwald, as well as J.W. Barney and Judy Stuart, just to name a few. These guest speakers are all very interesting to listen to and certainly add to the fun of attending our meetings and we will continue to try to have more guest speakers for the coming meetings. There is one particular speaker out there that we have not heard from. **That's YOU.** That's right, we all have a stein that has a story or has something unusual about it. You don't have to be an expert in Mettlachs or own a character stein that no one has ever seen before. All you have to do is share the story or the details of that favorite stein with the rest of us "non-experts" in a show-n-tell segment of our meeting. It's easier than you think and everyone can do it. **Even YOU.** So, start thinking about that deal you got on eBay, or that stein that your grandfather left to your father who left it to you, or the first stein you purchased, or the last stein you purchased, you get the idea. With your help, we can make the show-n-tell feature of our meetings the reason our members will attend. Let's all participate and have fun. (*Reprinted from the PSS Newsletter dated January 2018*).



Whites Utica

by Ron Fox & Dave Roche

This article is based on an article written by Ron Fox in an auction catalog for Fox-Terry Steins, Inc. (May 15, 1985). It was subsequently updated and supplemented with additional photographs for The Beer Stein Journal (August 1995). It is further extended and more photos are provided in this article.

Whenever we notice a blue stoneware beer mug or stein, we automatically assume that it was produced in Germany. In most cases we would be correct, with one noticeable exception: those made by Whites of Utica. Whites was started in 1839 by Noah White who was a barge pilot on the Erie Canal which ran from Albany to Buffalo, New York. Because of its prime geographical location, Utica was obviously an ideal spot for a stoneware factory. The waterway could be used to transport clay northward from the clay-rich areas of New Jersey and to return the finished products to major urban markets such as New York City, Boston and Philadelphia. Noah White eventually settled in Utica where he bought a pottery business owned by Samuel Addington and renamed it Whites of Utica. In 1849 Noah and his two sons, Nicholas and William, formed a partnership. The mark used on their wares at that time was simply Whites Utica or White's Utica. In 1863 Noah's grandson, William N. White, joined the firm and the name was changed to Noah White, Son & Co. William took over the firm's management upon Noah's death in 1865.

In the 1870s a new building was added, expanding the operation, which both modernized and improved production processes. A 65-horsepower steam engine was also added. Whites' major production items included jugs, churns, chamber pots, preserve jars, beer bottles, and fire bricks. In 1887 William's son, Charles N. White, took over the management. The pottery ceased production in 1910 after 71 years of uninterrupted stoneware manufacture. Toward the end of the 19th century, competition from stoneware factories in Ohio and the use of glass containers created serious problems for New York potters. The competition forced Whites to expand its range of products considerably and cupola brick, gas and oven tile, and beer steins were added. Production of beer mugs and steins was first introduced in 1885. In 1894, a German artist named Hugo Billhardt was hired. He was responsible for mold designing and introducing the German designs we often see. He worked there until 1901.



figure 1

were copies of German made steins of that time. This held true until the 1901 Pan American Exhibition in Buffalo, NY, where Whites displayed its wares. At that time the company tried to capture the American market and capitalize on its own name. From then on we find steins and mugs featuring American themes such as Washington Crossing the Delaware, Pan Am Expo, St. Augustine, and advertising pieces for breweries, restaurants, etc. (figures 2 - 4).

figure 2



figure 3



Styles

Because of the obvious attempt to copy German styles, many collectors who own beer steins made by Whites are not aware that they were actually manufactured in this country. It is our belief that Whites purposely sold their steins as German-made. We notice that they purposely omitted their identifying marks and often used German scenes and verses. They chose popular German themes such as tavern scenes, hunting scenes, Bavarian dress, etc. They even copied the popular Mettlach jeweled base body on some of their steins (figure 1). Even the three character steins they made

figure 4



From approximately 1885-1897 a saltglaze exterior with a clear silica glaze interior was used. From approximately 1895-1899 the saltglaze exterior was still in use but often a white Bristol glaze was employed on the interior. From approximately 1896-1900 a clear silica glaze was sometimes applied to the stein's exterior while using a white interior. From approximately 1898-1907 Whites often used a Bristol exterior glaze while again keeping a white interior.

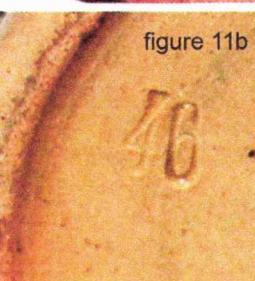
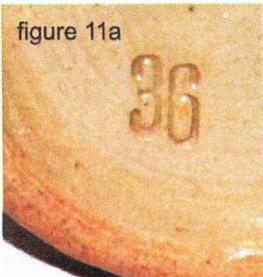


figure 12



figure 13



figure 14



figure 15



figure 5



figure 7



figure 6



figure 8



Types of Steins

All of Whites' beer mugs and steins can be broken down into five major categories: relief, etched, reverse-etched, character and hand-scratched. The most widely used bodies were those with relief scenes (figure 5). The etched steins just featured the scene's outline incised onto the stein's body (figure 6). In reverse-etched, (threaded relief) the scene's outline was raised rather than incised (figure 7). Their character steins were extremely limited. We know of only the Owl, Bismarck's head and the Keg, so far (figure 8). All of this style of stein were basically a monochromatic gray with cobalt. Yellow acre, green and brown glazed colors were rare and high priced (figure 9).

The rarest type of decoration is the custom hand-scratched pieces. These steins (or other hand-scratched forms) would have a detailed scene scratched into the stoneware body while it was in the unfired greenware state. This took their most talented artists as there was no room for error. It took great care to get clean lines without creating jagged edges or obvious mistakes. These pieces always have a scratched number on the base and not the usual impressed number. These are highly sought after by the advanced collectors. Figure 10 is an example of such a piece.

figure 9



figure 10



How They Were Manufactured

Most beer steins made by Whites were cast-molded rather than spun on a wheel. Liquid clay or slip was poured into a plaster mold thus creating the scene. These were done as a two-part mold or sometimes three-part mold with the mold seam right down the center of the stein rather than hiding them on the sides. This was done because the decorations were mainly displayed in the English style – on the sides of the piece – rather than the German style which utilized the front of the stein for the center of the scene. I must point out that some of the early saltglazed pieces were hand-thrown. Because no molds were used, no mold seams would be visible. The designs were usually impressed onto the piece by using special tools.

During different periods Whites used different types of interior and exterior glazes.

Here are some more Whites Utica steins
for your enjoyment.



figure 16



Pewter Lids and Mounts

The pewter lids and attachments were probably made either at the factory or nearby. They were not as fancy or detailed as the lids made in Germany. Whites lids were most often silver-plated but it was poorly done and wore off easily. They used half a dozen or so thumblifts, but one was used most often. For some unknown reason Whites almost always used a criss-crossed pattern cut into the front part of the tang (figure 16). This criss-crossed pattern was the pewtersmiths signature of marking his work.

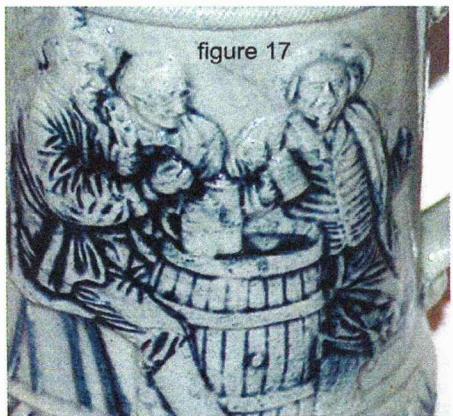


figure 17



figure 18

Whites was never able to master the relief work that they copied from the German artisans. Their relief work was not as well-defined and was lacking in detail, as you can see when you compare a closeup of a Whites piece (figure 17) to a typical German stein (figure 18). They were also never able to master the cobalt, green or brown glazing application, often running outside of the lines.

As is customary with American-made steins, the liter capacity marking normally found on German steins is omitted. While this is also true on some pre-war German beer steins, most carry a capacity mark. This lack of a capacity mark on American beer steins is normal and expected. We did not follow the metric system, so liter marks would have been meaningless here.

Other products

The Whites stoneware firm was the most active and successful of its day. They did their best to provide a product that would be desirable to the masses. Besides their line of beer steins, they made many other stoneware forms such as bean pots, vases, crocks, butter dishes, beakers, water coolers, umbrella stands, canteens, etc. The following photos are but a glimpse of the variety of their wares.

Much has been learned about these American-made but German-looking steins and mugs, but there is still much to discover.



