M.I. HUMMEL FIGURINES
HISTORY · COLLECTING · VALUES

DEAN A. GENTH, AUTHOR
Sister M.I. Hummel

- Born 21 May 1909 in Massing, Germany
  A. Birth name – Berta Hummel
  B. Religious name – Maria Innocentia Hummel
Biography – “Sketch Me, Berta Hummel” by M. Gonzalva Wiegand

- Father Adolph, was an artist, served in W.W. I—not able to pursue his talent
- Vowed to help any of his children with artistic ability so they could flourish
- Sent Berta to the finest Art Institute in Munich – 1927 entered The Academy of Fine and Applied Arts
“BERTA” – Early Success

- Became one of the Academy’s Outstanding Students
  - Favorite Student of Professors
  - Successful “one woman” shows in Germany
  - Became friends with two Franciscan Nuns and opts to join the religious order just as she was gaining national recognition as an “up-and-coming” artist of note.
Life at the Siessan Convent

- Entered convent as novice in 1933
  - After novice year—took vows on 30 August 1934
  - Mother Superior gives her a studio to keep painting
  - M.I. Hummel loved children and the wonders of nature around her.
Discovered By Franz Goebel

- Notecards are discovered in a shop by Franz Goebel in December 1933—Notecards were published by Ars Sacra of Munich
  - Goebel Factory on the verge of financial crisis
  - Goebel contracts with the Siessen Convent to Produce M.I. Hummel Figurines Based On the Artwork of Sister M.I. Hummel
  - Figurine production begins in 1935
Figurine Production

- W. Goebel Porzellanfabrik
  - Founded in 1871 in the village of Rodental, Germany
  - Ceramic firm once made slate boards and marbles
  - Figurine production took the company into a new era of success
How Hummels Are Made

- **Ceramic Process**
  - Moldmaking-Labor Intensive
    - Original Sculpted Models
    - Mother Molds
    - Working Molds
  - Hand Painting
    - Eyes are first thing painted – and the most difficult
TRADEMARKS

- Crown Trademark first used in 1935
- Trademark Style Identifies the Approximate Date a Figurine Was Produced
- Since 1980 the Goebel Factory has the finishing artist apply the date of completion
- Eight different trademark variations used from 1935 until present
Painting and Decorating

- 700 separate operations in the making of a Hummel Figurine.
- 25 different quality control inspection points.
- Each figurine is uniquely hand painted
  1. Brushes made of squirrel’s hair
  2. Eyes and lips are painted first
Bisque and Glaze Firings

- Bisque Firing for 18 hours at 2,100 degrees
- Glaze Firing at 1.872 degrees
- Paint Firings
  - Sometimes up to 10 separate firings to ensure colors from not negatively reacting to one another
COLLECTING OF HUMMELS
WW II Introduces Hummels to the U.S. Public

- Servicemen sent figurines home to friends and family.
- Traded cigarettes for figurines.
Sister M.I. Hummel Dies at young age of 37

- Dies of Tubercular Pneumonia on 6 November 1946,
- Siessan Convent still owns the rights to the three dimensional production of Sister M.I. Hummel’s artwork.
- ARS-AG to this day owns the two-dimensional rights to any lithographic reproductions of Sister M.I. Hummel’s artwork.
Collecting Hummels Reaches Apex in 1970’s and 1980’s
International M.I. Hummel Festival

- Established in Eaton, Ohio in 1978
- Thousands of collectors gather from all over the world

- Look Alike Contests
- Hummel Auction
- Entertainment
- Seminars
- Free Appraisals
- Dealers (worldwide) assembled to sell to the public
BOOK PUBLISHING HISTORY
HUNGARIAN HUMMELS

- Robert L. Miller Purchases 8 rare Figurines from Budapest Flea Market Dealer
  - Turns down $250,000.00 for the eight pieces
  - Figurines go into bank vault
  - Eight Figurines and Mr. Miller tour the USA
  - Later more samples are discovered
COLLECTOR FRENZY
1970’s STYLE

- Hummels sold in excess of suggested retail.
- Collectors would wait in line for stores to open on the days Hummels would arrive.
- Number of dealers and retail locations grew—purchase requirements by Goebel.
- In 1980’s production finally caught up with demand.
VALUATION OF
M.I. HUMMEL
FIGURINES AND ART
INSURING AND PROTECTING YOUR COLLECTION

- Inventory
- Current replacement values for insurance company
- Duplicate records
- Digital photos
- Check display shelves
 ORIGINAL M.I. HUMMEL ART

◆ Ars AG firm in Munich
  • Printing of notecards, postcards, and lithographic prints
  • Owner of two-dimensional rights
  • Owners (Nauer family) hold 436 originals
DEAN A. GENTH
VALUES ORIGINAL
ARTWORK IN SWITZERLAND

- Originals crated for 25 years
- Dean A. Genth as appraiser values entire body of M.I. Hummel artwork
  - Two “lost” originals discovered during appraisal process
- Some originals sent to U.S. for touring display
PUBLISHED WORKS by
DEAN A. GENTH

“Figurine Finesse” for Collector’s Mart
The Crystal Report
Hummel Identification and Price Guide
Warman’s Field Guide
Collecting Swarovski
Contributor to Price Guide to Contemporary Collectibles
Q’s and A’s