

THE LADY WITH BONNET WALL POCKET

By Craig Nissen



The Lady with Bonnet wall pocket was released for sale in 1943 and sold thru 1944. The "Lady" name for this wall pocket was again created by collectors. The catalog number is No. WP3. The pocket is 8" long and the width is about 4-1/8". This wall pocket has a complete coverage of an off-white glaze coloring and was the first to have cold paint decoration on a production product. The example on this page shows us the only cold paint colors and style of decoration that was used on this production product.



The back of the wall pocket showing the "McCoy" mark.

The Lady Wall Pocket is really a rather robust piece. A hairline may be found especially on the back side of the top opening. Once in a while a chip may exist likely toward the bottom like the piece dropped and that edge was damaged. But most likely the piece will be in good condition. The much higher probably is the loss of some of the cold paint which we collectors know is not very durable.



Although very rare, it is possible to find a Lady wall pocket with a souvenir label. Here we have an example of a label on a standard production piece for "New Bedford, Mass". What a great find!



An interesting variable on the Lady WP is found in the photo left. Note how the piece on the left does not have the tip included in the shape of the pottery piece shape. But equally important is to note how the red cold paint actually follows a line up to that edge like it is the normal shape. See usual pottery shape to the right in the photo. The kind of things we love about McCoy.....you just never know and this oddity is not that rare.



In the photo to the left, we have a production piece with production red decoration but also a signature on the side. This is the name of the decorator. There are two known examples of this Lady wall pocket with this decorator's signature. The other is on an example decorated with the large red dots as shown in the far right example - top row - in the photo below. What a piece of history this is.

In the photo to the right, there are six examples of variations known to date of the Lady wall pocket red cold paint decoration. The wall pocket in the center of the grouping is a standard decoration example for comparison. Red cold paint looks consistent on all to period; very likely these were done by an employee at the plant.



Left is a wonderful example of a special decoration of a Lady wall pocket. All decoration and signatures with cold paint. This piece was likely a gift from employees to an employee that was either out ill or maybe had a baby? If you look at photo with the 1944 date below, you can see the "To" address but the name has not survived nor the

simple greeting ending in "Valentine". If you note the name "Ty"; that is Ty Kuhn who ran the glaze department for many years.



The following photos are a number of examples of other decoration done by employees in and outside of the plant and probably family members in the community. These non-production, one of a kind decorated wall pockets, have always been of interest to McCoy Collectors that enjoy the Wall Pockets. The quality of the decoration varies to an extreme range from that of a talented artist creation to something done by someone that we might say is likely not an artist, to be as gentle as we can. These photos include many of the better examples that have surfaced to date. Using a very conservative approach, to be sure we are not exaggerating, there have already been over 70 different variations that have surfaced with these non-production decoration features.



The first (L-R) photo to the right, with wonderful detail, and colors, sold at a Koehler auction in July, 2002 for \$ 460.

The second example sold at the same 2002 auction for \$325. A unique feature on this WP is the face which has an additional glaze much like a “china doll finish of sorts”.

The third pink Lady WP is not only beautiful but one of only two original Lady wall pockets to have a base glaze of pink over the entire body instead of the off-white.



Going back to the previous page, the first example (L-R) in the bottom row also sold at that same 2002 auction for \$512.



Looking at these three photos left, the first one (L-R) has a tan colored decoration. But this decoration is more like a water color material. Should one decide to wash this with a little soap and water, the tan would be totally gone very easily. Examples have also been found of this material style with a light green color.

The other two examples left are “almost” twins. They too have the water color material for decoration which is mainly a light blue. The dots are a combination of light red and blue ones. The location of the two different dot colors are exactly opposite of each making each WP unique to itself.

As many McCoy Collectors know, every so often an example of a piece surfaces that you can tell was a “second” or “reject” when made.....frequently called “Oops” pieces. These two examples fall into that category. The first is an example that prior to the cold paint operation, a bit of brown glaze dropped onto the face area and was there when the wall pocket went thru the kiln as it is not coming off. The second example is quite similar. It may be a little more subtle in appearance but in the right center area, some light green glaze decided to reside there and again went through the kiln.



The photo on the left below is of another example beautifully decorated. However, this one has the name “Edna” added on the side. Edna was an employee of McCoy Pottery in that era. But even better than that, the owner of this lovely wall pocket today is the son of Edna! And the son is also a member of our McCoy Pottery Collectors Society! As an additional point on these decorated Lady wall pockets, the final picture below is of a pair that surfaced just this year (2017) and without question, had the same individual artistic decorator as the “Edna” piece.



On the subject of values, there will be a very dramatic difference in the Lady Wall Pocket examples. Here is a list in the order of the different areas as presented in this article. All value estimates will be based on no significant damage.

- The standard production piece is frequently found with varied loss of red paint and the amount of loss certainly will relate to where in a value range it might fall. \$10-20.
If the example appears to have almost all of the original cold paint: \$20-30.
- Good cold paint with a souvenir label: \$40-60
- As stated to date, only two examples are known to exist with the plant decorator's signature. These two examples sold around the year 2000 for \$500 /each. Present value: \$250-400.
- The special decorated wall pocket with all the employee signatures: \$400-600
- The six examples with red cold paint but variations in pattern style: \$40-80
- The variety of decoration styles in the category of generally having a quality artistic appearance: \$50-300
- The very special example with “Edna” on the side: \$150-300.
- For the Lady Wall Pockets found with a decorative addition but not production and that would be viewed as poorly done, somewhat crude or indeed a more recent decorative addition not from the period: \$15-50.
- The “Oops” examples; \$15-30



Unfortunately, the Lady in the Bonnet Wall Pocket has been reproduced. As usual, the repro wall pocket is smaller than the original. The reproduction is about 7-1/2" long and 3-3/4" wide as compared to 8" long and 4-1/8" wide for the original. Unlike the original, most of the reproductions are a solid glaze color making them a little easier to recognize.

Photo left shows reproduction example in a pink glaze with and original Lady Wall Pocket with her red cold paint decoration.

Comparison of the back of the wall pockets showing how the "McCoy" mark is not as detailed on the reproduction due to an original piece being used for a pattern and loss of some detail in that transition. The three resting surfaces for the kiln are actually a little larger on the reproduction.



In the two photos below, we have examples of the eight colors/style known that have surfaced to date and all are a gloss finish. The left photo has a tan or cream color and a light blue on the top row and a cobalt blue and pink color on the bottom. The right photo has an off-white base color on both of the top pieces with a dark blue and a red decoration respectively. The bottom row pieces are yellow and green.



One final topic is another form of reproduction that is certainly much less common. An individual, not the maker of the reproductions as shown on the previous page, took a reproduction and then decorated that reproduction. In the dark green colored reference book on McCoy Wall Pockets published in 2004, there are a few pages on the topic of this Lady Wall Pocket. In the photos below, you can see that this individual took the photo of a couple of period decorated originals shown in the book, and copied the style and general coloring when decorating the reproduction physical piece. The good news here is that this was obviously a tedious, time consuming job so there is a very limited amount of these pieces that were ever created. Should you run across a questionable one, measure the wall pocket and that should give you the help you need for identification.

COMPARISON – ORIGINAL LEFT VS REPRODUCITON ON RIGHT

