

MCCOY LIGHT - LAMP GLAZES

By Mal Anderson

I was thinking about the glazes on lamps the other day and of course something struck me as different but not unusual. We'll visit that idea again later in the article.

Glazes were naturally very different over the years of making McCoy Pottery. There were many glaze colors offered and of course you could get any one of the colors offered during the years of production of certain early shapes of lamps.

In those early years, glazes were mostly mono-colored gloss glazes. Soon after the beginning of lamp production in the mid-nineteen twenties with those gloss glazes, came the blended glazes. Today, we might refer to them as a multi-colored onyx glaze however they were produced with the many colors of a true blended glaze.



Then in the 1930s, we saw the matte glazes dominated by “Matte Tan & Green”, “Matte Green” and of course “Matte White”. Not long after the introduction of these initial three “Matte” glazes, a “Matte Blue” glaze arrived as did “Mottled Glazes” and “Onyx Glazes”.



“Matte Glazes” continued to be produced through the 1930s into the 1940s. Some early shapes were reintroduced in the 1940s that had been offered initially in the early 1930s. The “Leaves and Berries” motif was very popular during these periods and many lamps were sold with that design in mind. Later in the 1940s, we saw two modifications to the “Matte Glazes” where the berries were highlighted in red underglaze and there was also a version of “Matte White” with a green spray similar to what was seen on the “Tan & Green” types.

Some different subtleties were found in the matte white color lamps versus the gloss white ones. In the mixing of the glazes. I was told by Nelson McCoy that later in the day during the glazing process, workers would dilute the glazes to “Stretch” them until day’s or shift’s end. That would make the glazes, even though white, a small different shade if you will. The change was made by the glaze having a different viscosity and came out a little different when fired.

Along came the 1950s and there were many advanced design changes. Just think of the Arcature Lamps, the Mermaid Lamps, the Blossomtime Lamps, the Wild Rose Lamps, Hyacinth Lamps and the scarce Hunting Dog Planter Lamps. These all had a combination of colors integrated into their design. They were much harder to produce as it took longer to apply the different colors before firing where the glaze had to dry and set before the next color was applied.



Then in the 1960s, we saw the advent of “Cookie Jar Lamps”. Not all jars were produced as lamps however many were. Most were glazed with glazes similar to what was put on the Cookie Jars.

Now that the glaze eras have been laid out, this brings us back to the question that arose in my head in the beginning of this article. My mental question was “Did the same company that bought the Arcature Lamps, buy the Mermaid Lamps”? I had this thought because the two glaze combinations exist on both of these lamp shapes. Chartreuse and dark green, gray with red and black and white. I am puzzled by this and maybe we will never find the answer. Then there were the Buckingham Wall Pocket Lamps made with the two greens and the gray and red combinations however none in black and white. The Sunflower TV Lamp would have been a good candidate for these combinations of glazes.

Possibly an order sheet or other paperwork may surface someday but until then, where these lamps went will remain a mystery. Keep those lamps lit and stay safe from the virus.