

LOOK CLOSER!

A Study on Hemingray Embossing Errors

Over the course of its 120+ year history, the Hemingray Glass Company manufactured over a BILLION insulators. So, let's face it—they were bound to make a “few” mistakes along the way!

Embossings were an important part of an insulator. It could show who manufactured the insulator, when and/or where it was manufactured, the style number for reordering, and often included any relevant patent dates or features (for example, “Petticoat” signified the insulator had an inner skirt).

Overall, Hemingray's glass quality was held to a fairly high standard. But what about embossings? As you'll soon see, Hemingray was a bit more lenient. I'm sure the Hemingray Glass Company never imagined people would scrutinize what they stamped on their insulators, let alone that people would collect the darned things!

There are over 175 different CD numbers attributed to Hemingray, and over 1000 total embossings. Of those, over 400 embossings contain some kind of error or irregularity. That's way too many to show in a single display! In the interest of space (and sanity), this display only focuses on some of their really funny and blatant errors.

Why collect embossing errors?

Embossing errors can be fun and challenging to collect! They may not come in a rainbow of colors, but they can be just as rare (or even moreso) for typically a fraction of the price. Many of these pieces have taken me 20 years or more to find. I've made a point to examine every single Hemingray embossing I come across—tens of thousands. Granted, considering Hemingray manufactured over a billion insulators, that's a mere 0.001-0.005%! It's truly the needle in a haystack.



There are 9 different types of Hemingray embossing errors:

1) Spelling errors — My personal favorite, and the main focus of this display. Engravers misspelled quite a few words on Hemingray insulators. The most commonly misspelled words were “Hemingray”, “Petticoat”, and “Patented”.

2) Style number errors — In a few cases, they embossed the wrong style number on an insulator.

3) Over-engraving errors — Engravers would start spelling something wrong, realize their error, and then stamp or engrave the correct letters or numbers right over it.

4) Missing bars, dashes, and periods — Engravers weren't always consistent with adding periods or dashes. And sometimes, they'd forget to add crossbars to letters like “A” and “E”.

5) Backwards, upside-down & sideways — Engravers would sometimes emboss letters and numbers backwards, upside-down or sideways.

6) Extra characters — Insulators may have an extra letter or two just “hanging out” where they shouldn't be. Usually, the engraver started to emboss something in the wrong place.

7) Blot-outs — Blot-outs were used by engravers when a change in embossing was needed, such as correcting an error or updating the embossing.

8) Missing embossings — In rare cases, the engravers would forget to finish the job, or just completely skip embossing a mold.

9) Duplicate embossings — Also in rare cases, engravers would accidentally emboss the same thing on both sides of the insulator.

Turn Over for More Info!

Hey Hemingray, why all the errors?

We'll never know for sure, but we can make some educated guesses:

1) Difficulty — Engravers had to emboss molds backwards (in mirror view). If you've ever tried, you know that writing backwards can be difficult!

2) Literacy — Maybe an engraver didn't know how to spell a word. Petticoat, Patented, and Hemingray are all examples of "repeat offender" words.

3) Fatigue/Pressure — Perhaps the engraver had a long day or was running behind schedule.

4) Inexperience — In some cases, especially with earlier hand-engraved embossings, it's pretty obvious they hadn't been doing this for very long.

5) Confusion/Distractions — It's possible they got pulled away and lost track of what they were embossing. In other cases, like "Pettigoat", they probably confused the "G" stamp for a "C".

Known Hemingray Spelling Errors

* = Indicates the error can be seen in this display
 ? = In the price guide, but existence is questioned

Spelling Errors	CD Numbers Known
HEMIGRAY	106*, 113*, 115*, 121*, 122, 128*, 134, 154*
HEMINGAY	106*, 113*, 121*, 190?, 191*, 252*
HEMNGRAY	106*, 115*, 162?, 164*, 213?
HEWINGRAY	115*, 160*
HEMINGRY	122*, 134*
HEMINGRRAY	154*
HEMINGRA	154*
HENNGRAY	115? (probably HEMNGRAY)
HFMINGRAY	113* (unlisted)
HEM1NGRAY	113*
HEMINRAY	122
I IEMINGRAY	106*
MADE IN U	115*
MADE IN U.A.S.	155*
MADE IN U.U.A.	106*
MADE N U.S.A.	208*
MADE IN O.S.A.	202?

Spelling Errors	CD Numbers Known
MAD IN U.S.A.	115* (unlisted)
PATENTE	106*
PATETED	121*
PATNTED	147*
PATTENT	160*
PEITTICOAT	160*
PETTICOAI	145
PETT1COAT	160*
PETTICOAY	162?, 164*
PETTICOET	160
PETTIGOAT	162*
CHCIAGO	100*
TRANSPOSITON	190*, 191?
W.E.MFG.OC.	126.4*

Patent Date Errors	
MAY 1893	106* (should be MAY 2 1893)
MAY 2 1883	304/310* (should be 1893)
MAY 2 1899	121?*(should be 1893)
JUNE 17 1893	257* (should be 1890)
EC 19 1871	133.1* (should be DEC)
PEC 19 1871	136* (should be DEC)
MAY 2 1893	121*, 133 (SB - no drip points)

Style Number Errors	
9	113* (should be 12)
16	115* (should be 10)
Upside-down G	106* (should be 9)

Glassware (Go-With) Spelling Errors	
PATENETED	Globe fruit jar lid*
25th 1886	Globe fruit jar lid* (missing MAY)
UUIVERSAL	Universal Home Bottle*
Grême de Menthe	Crème de Menthe Bottle*
OIHO	Koch Beverage Bottle (Ohio)

As you can see, there's quite a wide variety of Hemingray embossing errors out there, and this display merely scratches the surface. Plus, new errors are still being discovered to this day. So before you pass by another aqua Hemingray-42... **Look Closer!**

Visit my web site, www.hemingray.info, to see many more examples of Hemingray embossing errors that didn't fit into this display!